

An American  
Madonna

Mary Ives Todd





193A

Autographes

125

To my friend of the  
Golden State with heart  
of gold, Mrs. Clara S. Ellis.  
Ever with warmest love and  
highest esteem.

Mary Pres Todd

Xmas 1908.  
New York





AN AMERICAN MADONNA

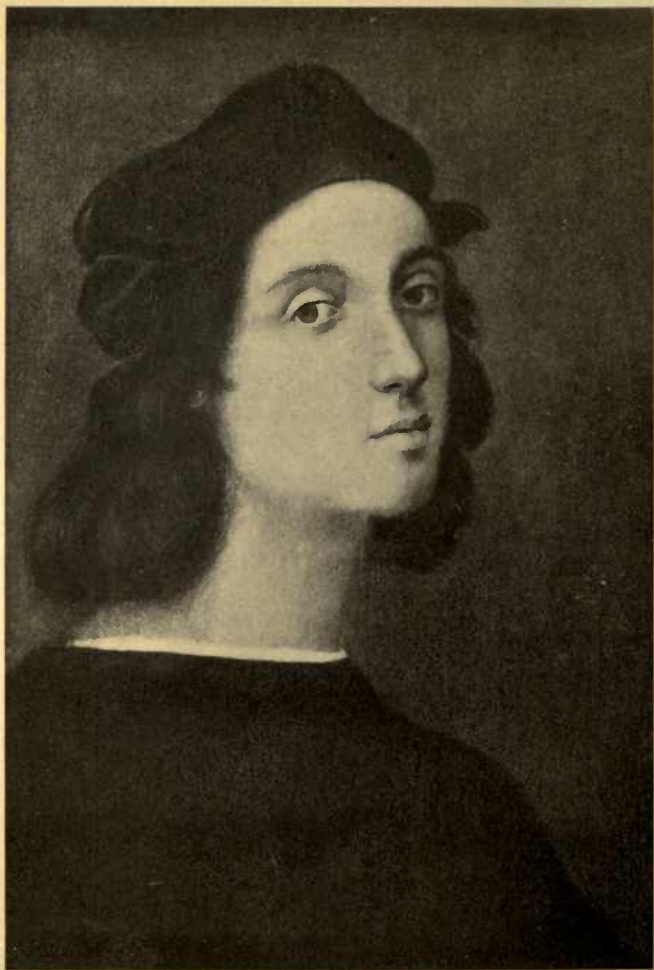
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*Raphael, whom Ivo, when in his best mood, resembled.*

# AN AMERICAN MADONNA

A STORY OF LOVE

By  
MARY IVES TODD

*"And tell me how Love goeth ?  
'that was not Love that went.'"*

1908

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**By MARY IVES TODD**



To  
*My sisters, Jennie and Vina;  
Loyal wives; devoted mothers; staunch  
friends;  
Queens of Home!*

M. I. T.



## CHAPTER I





*Of the true predestined love alone do I speak here. When Fate sends forth the woman it has chosen for us—sends her forth from the fastnesses of the great spiritual cities in which we live, all unconsciously, and she awaits us at the crossing of the road we have to traverse when the hour has come—we are warned at the first glance.*

MAURICE MAETERLINCK.

# An American Madonna

## CHAPTER I

The Niobe of nations! There she stands  
Childless and crownless in her voiceless woe.

—BYRON.

**O**H, Rome! How magnificent hast thou been! . . . But, alas, how cruel! . . . Truly, thou hast richly deserved thy fate!

These words were slowly and thoughtfully uttered by a young lady, Harriet White by name, as her father and herself sat on their fine but restive horses, gazing in sadness and awe at the most stupendous and thrilling ruin—in a world of ruins! Indeed this ruin represented all that was left of what had once been a wondrously vast, almost inconceivably magnificent work of art. Ah, and to think, that notwithstanding its prodigious cost and marvellous, gorgeous beauty, it has contributed more to the undoing and degradation of great

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multitudes of people than any other building, past or present, reared by man. Since, within its walls, vast numbers of men, women and children were taught to love idleness, low pleasures, and reckless cruelty. Nay, in a thousand hideous spectacles, they learned to take delight not only in the long, protracted, torturing death struggles of countless dumb creatures, but, likewise, of human beings, male and female, Christian and pagan. Prematurely cut short in this revolting manner were the lives of some of the loveliest, bravest, noblest heroes that ever dared to descend to our bloody globe and assume mortal robes of flesh. For this huge, slowly decaying structure, once so truly representative of Rome in the height of her magnificence, was the Coliseum.

There it stands; in the new Rome of to-day the most grand, the most solemn, the most mournful, and the most impressive object-lesson of the past.

As Mr. White and his daughter finally turned their horses about, in order to leisurely pursue their ride, a newspaper, caught by the



wind, came swirling through the air, attacking viciously—and blinding for an instant—Harriet's fiery, black horse. Quick as lightning the horse reared high in the air, then rushed madly forward, emulating the wind which had tossed the paper into his flashing eyes. Harriet tried to calm the mad beast. As well might she have endeavored to control the subtle current of air in its swift course. To add to her discomfiture the saddle began to slip to one side. In order to keep from being dashed under the animal's flying feet, Harriet was obliged to secure a firm hold of the horse's mane with one hand, while with the other she held on to one of the pommels of the sliding saddle. As the beast continued his flight she realized that her hands were becoming paralyzed with their tense grip. She could not hope to hold on much longer.

It was when things looked their darkest that two Italian soldiers, the one a captain and the other a lieutenant, saw her predicament. These officers had but lately returned from military service in Africa, where they had met with

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many a thrilling and hair-raising experience, and had learned a trick or two in the handling of horses. When they saw the mad black beast coming toward them full tilt, they immediately took measures to intercept his dangerous flight. It was arranged that the Lieutenant should make a dash for the bridle while the Captain was to vault on the horse's neck and give his windpipe a strangling embrace.

On came the mad beast. Swift as thought the Lieutenant made a grasp for the bridle, seized it, and held on. The Captain, too, had been successful—had landed on the neck of the beast, had stuck, and lost no time in choking the creature without mercy, until he perforce stopped, almost ready to drop.

Harriet, having extricated herself from her perilous situation, was quickly joined by Captain Bruno, who looked anxiously into her countenance to see if she were going to faint. He wished to be ready to support her in case of need. Observing his look of apprehension she smiled reassuringly, and for an instant her beautiful eyes looked straight into his dark,

handsome ones. Like an electric current, the glance seemed to penetrate every fiber of his being, and to set them vibrating in an exquisite manner. It was all he could do to keep from dropping on his knees and adoring her, as if she were indeed a Madonna straight from heaven. Ah, but she had stopped smiling and had begun to speak to him in the most musical of tones—so deep, so tender, so true! He must perforce wake from his dream of bliss and listen. It was not often that Harriet's speaking voice was quite the musical instrument that was now uttering simple, commonplace words. Though she looked calm and was unshaken in deportment, yet the great peril she had been in had affected her tones and made them unusually clear, sweet, penetrating.

"Not in the least," she said. Then, as Lieutenant Mayer stepped up, holding the bridle of the panting horse, she remarked gayly, "Ah, gentlemen, I am so happy to meet you! To be able to witness your gallant exploit is well worth my hazardous ride."

As Harriet finished speaking she held out



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her firm, ungloved hand, first to the Captain, then to the Lieutenant. This handshaking on Harriet's part was of that frank, close, tender character which expressed more truly the debt of gratitude she owed than any words could have done. Besides, she gave the Captain another straight glance as she did so, which, coming so close as it did on the heels of the other, made him wildly desire to prostrate himself at her feet.

However, sanity quickly returned to the Captain's brain, when he observed two men riding swiftly up to where they stood. They were Mr. White and his guide. The face of the former was pallid with fear; a cold sweat stood in drops on his capacious forehead, while his breathing was labored.

Harriet immediately helped her father to dismount, then took his hand sympathetically in hers as she said, "You see, dear father, that I am not in the least hurt. But I am so sorry that you should have had such a fright." Turning to the two men by her side she exclaimed, "These are the two gallant gentlemen who

have saved my life just as my hands were going back on me."

By this time Mr. White had got the use of his tongue, though he spoke with difficulty. "Gentlemen, I beg of you to call upon me at your earliest leisure, and give me an opportunity to relieve my heart of its burden of gratitude."

"*Altro!* It is we who should be grateful—for the privilege of being able to serve so brave and tenacious a young lady as your daughter has proved herself to be. But, since it is your wish that we call upon you, we shall do so—more particularly as we shall desire to learn if neither your daughter nor yourself experience any deleterious after-effects."

"Yes, indeed!" added Lieutenant Mayer, "we shall be eager to learn if you remain well, and the lady proves none the worse for her thrilling and hazardous ride. She showed great pluck and has the qualities for the making of a great soldier."

Hearing so generous a compliment from one who knew what he was talking about, Har-

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riet felt it incumbent upon herself to make the Lieutenant a profound obeisance, whereupon all laughed gayly, except Mr. White, who was still breathing with difficulty. Observing this, the guide said, "Signor White, shall I get a cab?"

Mr. White bowed, and the guide rode away. While this arrangement was being made the Captain and Harriet were gazing anew into each other's eyes—the one pair so dark and thrilling, the other so luminous and beautiful. But little attention was being paid by these two to the Lieutenant, who addressed himself more particularly to Mr. White. By the time the guide reappeared, accompanied by a fierce-looking but hustling Jehu with a rather rusty vehicle and an inferior-looking little horse, Harriet had convinced herself that the Captain was the handsomest man she had ever seen. A little later on she was to discover that he was likewise the easiest man to fall desperately in love with, and the hardest to forget.



## CHAPTER II



## DIGNITY OF TRADE

*Men must eat, they must be clothed, they must be housed. It is quite as necessary that you should eat good food as that you should read good books, listen to good music, hear good sermons, and look upon beautiful pictures.*

*That is sacred which serves. There are no menial tasks. "He that is greatest among you shall be your servant." The physical reacts on the spiritual and the spiritual on the physical, and, rightly understood, they are one and the same thing. We live in a world of spirit and our bodies are the physical manifestation of a spiritual thing.*

*We change men by changing their environment. Commerce changes environment and gives us a better society. To supply water, better sanitary appliances, better heating apparatus, better food served in a more dainty way—these are tasks worthy of the highest intelligence and devotion that can be brought to bear upon them.*

*We have ceased to separate the secular from the sacred. The way to help yourself is to help humanity. The way to cheat humanity is to cheat yourself. We benefit ourselves only as we benefit others.*

ELBERT HUBBARD.

## CHAPTER II

**O**N the following evening, but one of the two gentlemen instrumental in extricating Harriet White from a situation fraught with peril, called upon father and daughter. It was Lieutenant Mayer, sturdy of build, swarthy as to complexion, with hair like a raven's wing and eyes to match in color, who, after a few pleasant words by way of greeting, said very earnestly:

"I am sorry to inform you that my comrade is confined to his room with illness. Indeed he is a dangerously sick man, with a raging fever, and is occasionally delirious."

"How very sad!" murmured Harriet, while her countenance suddenly paled with apprehension. "Why, how comes it that he should be so ill, and so suddenly? He looked the picture of manly beauty and health last evening, when we bade him adieu."

"It was excitement that ~~g~~ve him a false



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appearance of ruddy health. The truth is, he has been for some time slowly convalescing after a very serious surgical operation."

"Indeed!" Harriet spoke but one word by way of reply, her mind being full of eager wonderment as to what had given occasion for the dreaded knife of the surgeon. She did not dare, however, to ask. Presently the Lieutenant gratified her curiosity by relating Captain Bruno's last gallant exploit in Africa, where, with his company, he had suddenly turned defeat into victory, thus saving the prestige of the white troops engaged, as well as the lives of a group of Italian soldiers. But the Captain himself had been carried from the field wounded so frightfully that it was thought he would never live to see his native land again. Nevertheless, when the hospital steamer arrived in Rome he was still breathing, and, after a very skillful operation, gradually grew stronger. Had he been in his usual health yesterday's trifling experience with the runaway horse would not have imperiled his health in the least. Under the circumstances, with a

wound superficially healed, he might find it hard to recover lost ground.

For a moment both Harriet and her father remained silent. They were deeply affected by what they had heard. Could it be possible that yesterday's accident was, after all, to cost the life of a human being? "And that human being so handsome, so easy to love," sighed Harriet to herself. As for Mr. White, he was thinking, "Thank God, that it did not cost the life of my precious and only child! But it is a bad business, as it is. I wonder what we ought to do under the circumstances?"

The Lieutenant, seeing both father and daughter absorbed in sad reflections, continued speaking, facing Harriet at the same time.

"I wish you could find it in your heart to return with me, at least for a short call upon my poor friend. Your presence at his bedside now might give him a new chance for his life. Ah, but you should hear him beg me in the most beseeching manner to bring to him 'Raphael's *American Madonna*'! Something in your countenance yesterday caused my

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friend to believe that he saw in your face a strong resemblance to the Madonnas of our greatest Madonna painter, Raphael. So, to-day, whenever he is partially delirious he demands, 'Comrade, bring Raphael's American Madonna! Don't forget! It is the American one I want. Make no mistake! Hurry up! Be off with you!' When I would bow in meek response, hesitating a little what to do, he would rise up in bed, with cheeks red as poppies, frantically urging me to 'Go! go! go!' Of course I would have to disappear a while. Then, when I would return, he would give me the same orders over again. At last he got so irritated at hearing me explain that you would come as soon as a cab could bring you—that you were on the way—and so on—any old thing I could think of to quiet him, that he began to throw things at me. Finally I hit upon an expedient which I hoped would work like a charm. I had our most beautiful nurse, about your height and form, put on her street clothes with a hat much like yours—also a veil, contributed by another



nurse. Now, I thought, I'm all right. He will never know the difference, with his brain in a dizzy whirl. Would you believe it? No sooner did he glance into her eyes than the poor sick Captain turned his back on us, and buried his head in a pillow. We were obliged to silently retreat, quite discouraged. You see, Signor White, I was actually compelled to come for your daughter."

"Yes, yes, I understand," commented Harriet's father. But he added nothing further, and when the situation was becoming a little painful, the Lieutenant suddenly laughed, then explained: "Really, we have had a good deal of amusement at the Captain's expense. Our young doctor—a raw substitute—the other one being still off on his vacation—of a humorous turn—declared that the Captain, ill as he was, had discovered what Italians, or, indeed, all Europeans had failed to find among Americans; that is, a woman of the madonna type. He further declared that 'America breeds clever women, handsome women, intellectual women, brave, independ-

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ent women; but, madonna women! *Dio mio*, never!’ After that, whenever we would hear the Captain pleading that Raphael’s American Madonna be brought to his bedside, we would laugh in spite of our anxiety about his health.”

Harriet understood perfectly her father’s reluctance to have her meet again the handsome captain. His clear mind saw danger ahead, and whenever in the past anything seemed to menace his plans in respect to Harriet, he had said to himself, “This must be nipped!” Hitherto success had crowned his efforts in removing every impediment which threatened to affect seriously the career for which he had zealously trained his Harriet for two whole decades, ever since she was a little maid of five; ever since he had divined that Dame Nature had placed within her head a brain of the same far-seeing, exact, comprehensive, and subtle business fiber as his own.

True, Dame Nature had acted with her usual idiotic blindness in respect to consequences, since, having given wee Harriet her

father's capacious brain, she had placed in her bosom her Italian mother's madonna heart; and, as if this were not enough to handicap her seriously for success as a competitor in American business enterprise, she had recklessly endowed her with the most ardent Italian love for art in its manifold phases. The result being that poor Mr. White was continually kept busy "nipping" some new conflicting development in Harriet's manifold nature. The first had to do with her growing attachment for her dolls. They having multiplied to seven before Harriet herself was seven, and her care of them becoming a passion, Mr. White said one day, "These dolls consume too much of your time. Put them away. You are now too big to play with such senseless things."

"Oh, but I love them so," was the little mother's reply as she sorrowfully obeyed.

But the most trying nipping experience of all for Harriet had been when her father paid and discharged her Italian singing teacher, remarking, "I do not wish my daughter to perfect herself farther in the vocal art. How

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are your wife and children in Italy?" The man replied with embarrassment and departed. Harriet never saw him again. Her father had perceived that his daughter, destined for a high and commanding place in the business world, was rapidly developing an uncontrollable love for music. Her lovely, mezzo-soprano voice, with excellent training, bid fair to rival that of the great Malibran. Also Mr. White perceived that Harriet was falling in love with her teacher, a highly trained Italian maestro and an agreeable gentleman, who, for some reason—best known to himself—never hinted to his devoted pupil that he possessed such inconvenient things as wife and children, dependent upon him for support. Hence in this instance two loves were "nipped."

But everything and everybody that promised danger farther on, had been just as promptly and successfully nipped. Was he to be checkmated now that he was old and becoming feeble, and had his Harriet perfectly trained to step into his business shoes? In-



deed, she already was in them—he merely acting as adviser, doing little of the real drudgery. His success in playing the part of both mother and father to his only child, and molding her in the form desired, had been “simply marvelous,” everyone said. However, here was a new occasion for his “nipping” process. To permit Harriet, with her ardent Italian heart, to fall seriously in love now, meant, he feared, ruin to his hopes. Yet, what to do? While he was vainly conjuring some way out of the difficulty that should not appear too heartless, Harriet spoke:

“Dear father, surely you can trust me. Let us go at once, before it is too late. Come, I will get our hats and gloves, and we will be off.”

Mr. White reluctantly consented, wishing for once that Harriet were not the picture of perfect health, or that he had taken the precaution to retire early on this fateful evening—ill. Under the circumstances he must perforce go with Harriet to the bedside of the most handsome man he had ever set his eyes

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upon—a type of beauty that recalled old Venice when her ruddiest, strongest, bravest, handsomest brood of virile citizens were on her stage playing their parts, to the admiration of the world.

The ride in the cab was quickly made, the horse being driven at a swift gallop and the distance not great. They found the Captain's nurse playing hide and seek with her patient from behind a partly opened door. She had been driven out by the Captain, whom they could see through the crevice wildly tossing his arms about as if trying to drive something away that menaced his peace of mind. His aspect, though frenzied, was picturesque. His curling, dusky-gold, luxuriant hair, grown longer than usual, formed a magnificent burnished background for his Raphael face with its perfect eyebrows and expressive dark eyes. True, his glance was glowering now, and quite unlike in expression to that of the ever calm and beautiful countenance of the world's greatest painter.

While the Lieutenant hesitated what to do

with Mr. White and his daughter, now that he had brought them to the very door of his sick comrade's room, Harriet herself quickly crossed the threshold and soon had secured both the Captain's hot hands in her cool, strong palms. Next for a moment she held his glance firmly with her own. Doubtless a person with keener eyes than our ordinary ones could have seen Harriet's eyes sending a stream of tender, healing love straight into that other pair, now, alas, so full of pain and bewilderment.

Presently she laid his hands down that she might place one of her own at the base of his brain, while with the other she skillfully massaged his hot forehead. Thus had she often relieved her father when his head was hot and throbbing with pain. She hoped to have the same success with Captain Ivo Bruno. While she was busy exercising her powers of healing on a new patient, her father had permitted the Lieutenant to seat him just inside the door. As for the Captain's comrade, he stood where he could watch Raphael's American Madonna

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ply her madonna gifts. He smiled broadly when the beneficial effects of her treatment became apparent and her patient's regular breathing proclaimed that he was fast asleep. At once he came forward, and, warmly shaking her hand, said in a low voice, "Brava! You are the right sort of a magician."

"No, not a magician; but I believe I am endowed with some healing power. However, Lieutenant Mayer, your comrade is a very sick man. He should have a skillful doctor immediately. Pray, let us send for my father's physician. He is very clever."

"By all means! Because, if there is any danger of blood poisoning setting in, the more promptly such indications are skillfully dealt with, the better!"

Harriet now turned to her father, saying, "We will go for him right away, shall we not, dear father?"

"Yes, indeed!" responded Mr. White with alacrity. He was only too glad to get his daughter away from that handsome fellow's bedside. He sincerely hoped that the next



day would find the Captain so much improved that they could proceed at once to New York, for they had already overstayed their vacation by three days, and all because Harriet had wished to give Rome a hurried visit when she could view once more the majestic, awe-inspiring Coliseum by moonlight: a fearful, a haunting, but always a glorious spectacle!



## CHAPTER III







*Raphael's "St. Barbara," whom Harriet resembled.*



### CHAPTER III

**N**OTWITHSTANDING the fact that the best of medical skill, supplemented with exquisitely tender and intelligent nursing, promptly took Captain Ivo in hand, a fortnight tediously and anxiously passed ere that young man gave promise of being able "to pull through"; for his vital forces were at a low ebb when this new demand was made upon them, and nature must, sorely handicapped, do her healing work over again. In the meantime Captain Ivo had become so attached to "Raphael's American Madonna" that it was with difficulty he could be persuaded to part with her long enough for her to obtain necessary sleep. As for her meals, she was for a long time obliged to take them with her patient, he obstinately refusing to eat anything unless she shared it with him.

When the Captain began really to mend,

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he quickly turned their dainty repasts into little comedies, he himself playing the part of star performer. Often would he pretend that he was too weak to feed himself. Harriet would humor him by giving him his food with smiling grace and madonna tenderness. This gave him his coveted opportunity to intercept and kiss her hands as often as he liked; and he liked not seldom. Occasionally he would bite instead of kiss the hand that was feeding him. Feigning contrition, he would beg her to kiss and make up. In this way he secured a lot of kisses while he was still in more or less danger of a fatal relapse; sweet madonna kisses which he never forgot as long as he lived. As he got stronger, and it became correspondingly difficult to obtain a kiss on his lips from those of "Raphael's American Madonna," he made the ones he did get last as long as possible by clutching her hair with both hands and holding her face close to his until she either screamed or managed to get hold of his hair, when, sometimes, he found her a not unequal competitor in hair-pulling.



Often, however, the two chatted in a serious manner, Captain Ivo finding it delightful to pour into Harriet's sympathetic ear his past life with its intermingled joys and sorrows, successes and failures, loves and aversions, hopes and aspirations. He told her how his mother had secretly abetted him at every opportunity to become an artist. How his father, on the other hand, had been determined that he should win military laurels as he himself had done with Garibaldi; and how, to bring to pass this desired end, he had been obliged to pass through a certain military academy, and next to accept a position in the army, to his infinite disgust.

"But it appears from what Lieutenant Mayer tells me, that you proved yourself a gallant and splendid soldier."

"Oh, I'm not a coward," said Ivo, "but now that my father is dead, I shall lose no time in dedicating myself to that art made so divine a thing by Raphael."

At this point, Harriet exclaimed, "Bravo!" very energetically for so calm a person. Then

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half closing her eyes, she repeated dreamily from Hawthorne's "Twice Told Tales":

"Oh, glorious art! Thou art the image of the Creator's own. The innumerable forms that wander in nothingness start into being at thy beck. The dead live again. Thou recall-est them to their old scenes, and givest their gray shadows the luster of a better life, at once earthly and immortal. Thou snatchest back the fleeting moments of history. With thee there is no past; for at thy touch, all that is great becomes forever present; and illustrious men live through long ages, in the visible performance of the very deeds which made them what they are. Oh, potent Art."

"It is my turn to cry 'Brava!'" said Ivo, quite beside himself with joy. "Now that we discover that we are of one mind, children of Art, come to my arms, and let us embrace like——" He started to say, "like brother and sister," when it occurred to him that an embrace of that character would not suit him at all.

In the meantime Harriet guessed his pre-

dicament, and, fearing that he might declare his love in a manner she would find hard to repel, she at once rose, saying:

“Do you know I am neglecting my poor father for you? Every day sees him more feeble, while each new day finds you making prodigious leaps back to health and strength. I must leave you with the Lieutenant and return to him.”

These words punctured Ivo's bubble of happiness. He lay back on his pillow, looking pale and bloodless. Next he sighed and closed his eyes, wondering if Harriet really would go and leave him half-fainting with fear—for he divined that her next move would be to tell him she must return to America with her father, now that he was out of danger. The thought of her going far, far away, was too much for his self-control in his present weak state of health. The tears would come—would roll in big drops over his pale, thin cheeks. Being ashamed to cry “like a woman,” he turned his back to Harriet, who now stood by his bedside in hat and wrap

ready to depart. She could not leave him thus, for it took so little to retard his recovery.

"Come," she said, "turn over that handsome, shining head of yours, and let us kiss and make up." This offer was so tempting that the Captain lost no time in obeying. As he did so, he remarked, "It's an age since I've had one."

"It's an hour," interposed Harriet.

"And I mean to make the most of my diminishing opportunities," replied Ivo, pretending not to hear Harriet's interpolation. So when her face came close to his he grasped her hair and held on viciously, while he covered her eyes, cheeks, nose and lips with ardent kisses. Indeed he did not let up until a fiercer hair-pulling bout than usual had left him panting—but happy once more.

"Sit down!" he urged. "I have something very important to say to you."

"Oh, it will keep," replied Harriet. "I really must return to my dear father. His health is very precarious. He has missed me



fearfully since you have been so ill and required so much of my attention; and his health has declined until he is quite irritable and impatient. Immense business affairs also claim his attention—make him feel that we should be turning our faces homeward. I shall simply run away this time.” And, suiting the action to the word, Harriet disappeared before Ivo could utter another syllable, or even groan.

Harriet found her father in the apartments they had taken, close to the hospital, looking unusually feeble and ill. He was lying on the sofa and did not attempt to rise to a sitting posture when she came in. At once she relieved herself of her wraps, then took his head in her two strong, magnetic palms, placing one at the base of his brain, while with the other she skillfully massaged his forehead. When he began to look more cheerful, and a slight glow appeared in his cheeks, she remarked soothingly:

“The Captain is so much better that I think we can be off to-morrow for our dear Amer-

ica. Thank God! Have you decided about the sum to deposit in the bank for each of the two men who, without a thought of what it might cost them, so gallantly saved my life?"

"I have already attended to that matter. When we are on the ocean, they will learn that they have each to their credit \$50,000."

"A generous living for each, in Italy—provided they invest it well."

"What they do with it is their business, of course. They are, however, deserving men; have served their country in a gallant and distinguished manner—as well as my dear daughter and ~~X~~. Lieutenant Mayer has a big family of children to support, besides a weakly wife and a feeble mother. He can now afford to educate his children, instead of turning them prematurely into bread-winners. As for Captain Bruno, the doctor informs me that he may never be a strong man again; that he cannot hope to re-enter military life."

"I do hope they will accept the sums you have placed at their disposal." Harriet felt

almost sure that Ivo would have nothing to do with his.

“They will feel obliged to accept them after they have read the letter which is to be delivered to them when too late to refuse—a small gift, considering the service rendered. In the letter I have told them the burden of gratitude their noble act has placed on my life. I have explained that it would be cruel to me in my present state of health to refuse me.”

“Ah, I am very glad that you have made it impossible for two deserving men to be unjust to themselves. Dear father, never did I admire you more or love you so well as now. You are a truly great man—one who does the right, beneficent thing at the right time, and in the right way.”

Harriet captured one of her father's hands, softly caressed it, and, before giving it up to its owner, covered it with kisses from the sweetest of lips—rosy, beautifully formed, healthy, full of vitality!

Apprehensive tears filled the eyes of Mr. White as he slowly, reluctantly answered,

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“Dear Harriet, I could not live without you. You have been all in all to me ever since, as a babe, you would cling so tenaciously to my forefinger, or, indeed, any finger you got hold of.”

Harriet smiled as she said, “You will find me clinging to you with the same tenacious grip, as long as we live. Nobody shall be permitted to separate us—should such an atrociously selfish thought enter the head of anyone.”

“Thank you. My heart is greatly relieved. I have feared that you might fall in love with another handsome Italian, you yourself being half Italian; but, thank God! you have your father’s brains.”

A look of proud joy took possession of Mr. White’s countenance and made him appear a different man.

“Everyone tells me I am ‘a chip of the old block,’ father. But I owe not only my brains to you, but all that I am, or ever hope to be, for you have been both a tender mother to me, and a wise, thoughtful father.”



“I have done my best to rear you right. I have read, aye, studied a thousand books and spent countless hours trying to solve the problem how to train and educate my little Harriet so that she could play a really useful and great part in life, and I think I am but speaking the truth when I affirm that there are few women—perhaps none—who are to-day your match in the possession of great stores of well-digested, practical knowledge. As for your grasp of business details, affairs, and complications, few men are your superior, young as you are.”

“That comes of your pruning away promptly everything that tended to distract my attention and fritter away my precious time. Alas, who can estimate the hours lost by the young in undue attention to trifles light as air! In the mere matter of the arrangement of my hair, what a lot of time you have saved me by insisting that I do it simply—and then forget it. Ah, yes, if I ever do anything worth while, I shall give you the credit.” Harriet embraced her father anew with glowing

eyes. He felt reassured. No one was to come between them. No one was to recklessly undo what he had been a lifetime laboriously building and storing; that is, a brain capable of handling immense business interests, which had been slowly and toilfully developed by many years of prodigious toil—business interests on the success of which thousands depended.

Mr. White was not unlike John D. Rockefeller in build, with the same large bald pate, keen, well-set gray eyes in rather deep sockets, a shorter upper lip, a less sanctimonious expression, a little less genius for business, and a little more conscience. In religion he was a commonsense man of the Thomas Paine order; preserving a deep and profound faith in a God who obviously knew more than he did, and who was gradually, but unmistakably, assisting all creation to progress Godward—into something wondrously, inconceivably powerful, wise and good.

Harriet proceeded to make the necessary preparations for their journey to America.

She resolutely forebore to think of the morrow, saying to herself: “ ‘Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.’ Besides, I shall need all the reserved strength I can command in what may perhaps be my last meeting with Captain Bruno. Of course in his weak state he will play the part of a baby. Ah, me, how I love babies in general, and Ivo in particular!”





## CHAPTER IV



*"The same rich hair is yours, the sweet deep  
eyes  
That meet us in old frescoes, where are  
wrought  
The prayers of the old masters as they  
sought  
To paint Christ's mother.*

*"I see—no, Raphael, Guido were not blind:  
'Twas such as you at twilight come to greet  
Their tired footsteps at the door, that  
taught their art  
To weave its sainted spell about the heart."*

CHARLES COLEMAN STODDARD.

## CHAPTER IV

**A**FTER Harriet had made her father comfortable on the morrow and had attended to importunate business matters, she found her way quickly to Captain Ivo's sick room. No sooner did that gentleman catch sight of her than, as usual of late, he held out his arms, eager to embrace his "madonna nurse." Ivo's face fairly shone, being quite transfigured by the love he bore her. By the way, what is love—that it can work such miracles in the human countenance as to make one dream of angels, of gods and goddesses—make one know there is something in the universe that eye hath not seen nor ear heard, transcendently beautiful, compact of Sweetness and Light? On the other hand, when one is possessed by the spirit, of passion, of hate, how one's countenance darkens and glowers like that of a mad beast!

After Ivo had held his Harriet to his breast

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closely yet tenderly, and had given the lover's long, clinging kiss, together with half a dozen impetuous boyish ones thrown in for good measure, he said, impatiently:

"Sit down! I have a plan to propose—something to make your father well and strong."

"That is worth considering, surely, seeing that we have tried many things with doubtful success." Harriet smiled indulgently at his boyish enthusiasm. He resumed, giving the hand he held an extra squeeze:

"Why cannot we three—or five, rather, since you will want to take your doctor and secretary along—spend a little time at my beautiful ancestral home? Grandmother Bruno left it to me, for I was her idol. The castle villa is perched on an elevation high above the sea, in the purest, best, most invigorating air imaginable. The road winding up to this high-perched Bruno Home reveals, as it ascends, a thousand charmingly romantic though sometimes magnificent scenes. My friends have frequently told me, while sitting on our ter-



race, that the extended view of the surrounding country, embracing as it does a great stretch of sea, snow-capped mountains, waterfalls, romantic ruins and picturesque, historic places, was the finest, most romantic they had ever seen."

"Ah, how I should love to walk or ride up that winding road, and sit on that terrace!" sighed Harriet.

The Captain was so pleased that he had not received a calm but firm "*non possumus*," that he continued piling up new attractions having to do with his ancestral home.

"Why, at one bend of this winding road there is actually a fine view to be had of ancient catacombs——"

At this point in his narration Harriet shuddered; but yet she said smilingly, "Go on! go on!"

"What's the matter?"

"Oh, ever since I nearly got lost in some of the interminable catacombs of underground Rome, the very word somewhat terrorizes me."

"But my catacombs are all right," stoutly

asserted Ivo, as Harriet withdrew her hand from his, and, pulling out of her expensive bag—a present from her father's manager—a fine piece of linen, intended as a little gift to her tutor in New York, began to embroider a bit of poetry in a corner of it. She had already hemstitched it in an exquisite manner. The Captain did not ask her whom the handkerchief was for, hoping that she meant it for him.

“They are not underground—not altogether,” he declared, “but peacefully repose under picturesque, vine-draped walls. But, since catacombs is an unsavory subject, let me call your attention to a view that brings to mind perhaps the most wonderful people, all things considered, who ever made a home for themselves on this little, spotty globe.”

“The Greeks, you mean,” interpolated Harriet, as Ivo paused.

“None other; and they, some of them, actually built a theater on a cliff of this winding road, the ruins of which set one dreaming and looking backward, recalling famous Greek plays and equally famous Greek actors

robed in wonderful classic costumes expressing sentiments wise, witty or pathetic, in a wonderful language."

"Ruins of that kind I am always delighted to see, to examine—and to dream over." Harriet looked up from her work smilingly, while Ivo caught the hand nearest to him and kissed it. He was so happy. Surely he might win out yet, and the sad day of parting be indefinitely postponed. He continued excitedly:

"Why, yes, besides the catacombs—beg pardon, I meant to say 'Greek ruins'—there's Mt. Etna, far grander than when Nature first tossed her up, more than a thousand feet above the sea, and located her so that her grandeur is very impressive. Also the views to be had of the great, pale turquoise sea, at various places as we ascend or descend this serpentine road, are not by any means to be despised."

"Surely not! Sometimes I am tempted to think that the strange, strange sea with its myriad moods, its usually divine, though sometimes diabolical beauty, its terrorizing instability and inconceivable cruelty—at times—is

the most mysterious work of Nature—after man.”

“Say, ‘after woman!’” exclaimed Ivo, laughing a little. “Really man does not begin to be the mystery a woman is, be she peasant or queen.”

“Oh, I don’t know. Both are infinitely mysterious—as is everything; so that man will, doubtless, be infinitely employed guessing and unraveling the infinite mysteries of God. But tell me some more about your romantic, high-perched home.”

“If one is a lover of myth, fairy lore and legend, one has but to lend an ear to the peasants of the soil to have it filled with uncanny tales in connection with every height, waterfall, gorge, cave or rock. Likewise in this divine spot—according to tradition—the very gods and goddesses of Greece used to descend sometimes, and, instead of quarreling in a scandalous manner, as they have been accused of doing while on Mt. Olympus, here, on the other hand, they bathed one another’s feet, kept their robes spotless, sang holy songs—in



short, treated one another like Christians, each preferring the other, and serving one another in a spirit of love——”

“My heavens! you must be getting delirious again, *caro mio*.” Harriet laid a cool hand quickly on Ivo’s brow, regarding him with so serious a look that he burst out laughing most joyously, hearing which Lieutenant Mayer stepped into the room and improved his opportunity to shake hands with Harriet.

“Always you are the magician,” he said pleasantly.

“Oh, no; not now. It’s your comrade who is the magician; raising Greek gods and goddesses for my benefit. And would you believe it, he is endowing them with Christian graces!”

“What kind are they?” innocently queried the Lieutenant. “I have been in the army so long, I quite forget.”

“Oh, don’t ask me. I am a business woman. In the world of business we are still barbarians. You know we think nothing of decapitating one another, financially, or of bringing

ruin upon thousands of people if we can thereby feather our nests more quickly. Ah, but I must be going—must bid my two life-preservers ‘good-bye’ for the present. We start at two. Father asked me to thank you again for helping to save his daughter, and to tell you how sorry he was that in his feeble condition he must husband his strength; otherwise he would have climbed the necessary flights of stairs in order to see you once again and have the pleasure of taking you both by the hand.”

While the Lieutenant was unnecessarily prolonging his leave-taking of Harriet—*meanwhile holding her hand*—Ivo was not only losing every particle of patience he ever had, or thought he had, but a terrific brain storm, fast becoming a tempest, was brewing in his head—or was it Magdalen’s seven devils that suddenly took possession of him? At any rate he rose up in bed, looking very much like a fiend, and, grasping the jeweled bag Harriet had laid down on her chair near his bed, shot it with great force at his comrade’s head.

Next, he leaped out of bed, strong, for the time being, as a giant, and actually thrust his dazed comrade out of the room so quickly that Harriet was not a little disturbed, though she did not show it. She had been rigidly trained by her father to let nothing rob her for an instant of perfect self-control. Quickly recovering her usual inner poise, she wondered what Ivo would do next, now that he had succeeded in locking the Lieutenant out of the room. It was a queer situation for a beautiful young woman to find herself in; for, the month being September in Rome, and the Captain, in his tempest of rage having quite forgotten such a small detail as clothes, looked strangely ghost-like in his long, invalid robe. Also it made him seem supernaturally tall in his present gaunt condition.

Having successfully got rid of the Lieutenant, Ivo turned about and faced Harriet, his eyes blazing like coals.

"Snake! Witch! Fiend!" he hissed. Pausing a moment to transfix her with a gaze perfectly diabolical, he continued, as if addressing

a group of Dantean devils: "A woman is always a woman! Always sly, tricky, treacherous! Everlastingly a snake! charming a man with her basilisk eyes, then stinging him into madness! . . . Nevertheless, though your treacherous conduct has envenomed my whole being, I am not yet so mad but that I will listen to an apology, if you have any to offer."

As Ivo finished his angry outburst it was evident that Harriet's quiet, calm deportment had somewhat stilled the tempest in his breast. Also, returning sanity made him conscious of his appearance. Of his own accord he got doggedly—if a little sheepishly—back into bed and drew the coverlid about him. After the tempest, or perhaps in the midst of it, comes the rain. So in this human tempest. The tears came swift and fast into Ivo's burning eyes, and flowed down his thin cheeks. Next came heart-breaking sobs, while Harriet was unlocking the door to assure his poor comrade—already sporting a darkened eye—that the Captain was quite himself once more, and she



would now proceed to put him into a restful slumber by massaging his hot head.

"All right! Then I will go and give my eye some more treatment, else I shall look like I had been in a fight. Once more, good-bye."

"Good-bye," answered Harriet, as she heartily shook his hand again.

"You are always saying good-bye to that fellow," complained the Captain, in the midst of his sobs. A whiff of jealousy had seized him anew.

"To be sure! So as to get rid of him. We can then go on with our nice little private talk together."

"Oh, is that the reason?" exclaimed poor Ivo, all at once immensely relieved; and, swiftly as the tempest had gathered, just so swiftly did it subside. He held out his arms, saying with eyes as full of love as a moment before they had been glowing with hate:

"Come, let us kiss and make up."

Harriet having satisfactorily performed her part in the love-mending that followed, Ivo once more lay back on his pillow, pale,

spent, but infinitely happy, because he was now convinced that Harriet had not really intended to slip away without giving him a chance to come to an understanding with her; for she must know, as well as he himself, that he loved her madly, and *must* have a word of encouragement to live on when she was gone, else he was sure he could not endure to live. Besides, why had she done her best to save his life, if she meant to cruelly rob him of it at the first opportunity?

## CHAPTER V



FOREVER AND A DAY

*I little know or care  
If the blackbird on the bough  
Is filling all the air  
With his soft crescendo now;  
For she is gone away,  
And when she went she took  
The springtime in her look,  
The peachblow on her cheek,  
The laughter from the brook,  
The blue from out the May—  
And what she calls a week  
Is forever and a day!*

*It's little that I mind  
How the blossoms, pink or white,  
At every touch of wind  
Fall a-trembling with delight;  
For in the leafy lane,  
Beneath the garden boughs,  
And through the silent house  
One thing alone I seek.  
Until she come again  
The May is not the May,  
And what she calls a week  
Is forever and a day!*

THOMAS B. ALDRICH.



## CHAPTER V

**A**ND now, *caro mio*, that we are again the best of friends, let me hear what further you wish to tell me about your wonderful Bruno Home.

Though we cannot remain to see it now, a few months hence, when we shall likely go abroad to some wonderful place to spend our vacation, we may do so; provided," she added mischievously, "it really is worth seeing. Father makes it a point to visit only those countries, places, scenes which he considers of educational value to his daughter, Harriet, whom he has tried so hard to educate ever since she first clung tenaciously to one of his big fingers."

"Well, I told you that some Greek gods and goddesses thought it worth their while to visit this romantic spot——"

"Where they actually developed Christian graces——"

“Che! che! Pray let me go on. I want to convince *you* that it is worth *your* while to visit this noble spot and live for a time on the heights with the glorious God of nature——”

“Ah, but when it storms I may come down, may I not, and visit with you in your villa——”

“Che, che, che, che! Stop interrupting me with idiotic questions. Of course we are to climb the great mountains together, hand in hand, freely drinking in the pure nectar——”

“Of the Greek gods with Christian graces.”

Ivo, by way of reply, brought his hand down with crushing force; but, happily, Harriet’s missed the blow.

“How nagging women are—the best of them! I don’t wonder men have been trying to suppress them ever since the world began! They are inconceivably, insufferably, unendurably, tantalizingly mean and petty; enough to drive every man on the globe crazy.”

Harriet was quite pleased with her success in rousing a belligerent mood in Ivo. To part with him, while he was fuming, would be easier

than to do so when he was sunk in despair. She did not wish to drive him to extremities, however, so she said in an apologetic manner:

“You should understand, angelo mio, that having been reared a business person, I have enjoyed but a bowing acquaintance with the God of Nature; while as for the companionship of Greek gods and goddesses, that I cannot hope to have. I must, perforce, worship with my people at the shrine of Mammon. But, tell me of your castle-villa. Love for and appreciation of domestic architecture is not yet a lost art with me, though I have ceased designing anything of the kind. I shall probably live and die in our old-fashioned home in ‘little old New York.’”

“Dio mio—no!” Again Ivo’s hand came down with unnecessary force, and, as before, Harriet skillfully evaded the descending palm. “We shall live and die in my little, high-perched Paradise, and our bodies shall repose in one tomb. As for our shades, they shall join——”

“Those of the Greek gods with Christian graces——”

“Beware! You might get a black eye, right in the midst of your idiotic talk!”

Ivo was furious, and looked it. Harriet, by way of reply, calmly pulled out her watch, when she said: “I have but a few moments more, and you have not yet told me what a woman wants most to hear about—a romantic home, the one where, likely, you yourself were born; you, who really must look like a Greek god in form when in health, and your frame is properly cushioned with flesh. As for your face, that often reminds me of the portrait of Raphael painted by his own hand when he was about your age, or, possibly, a couple of years younger.”

Ivo blushed with pleasure, like a girl hearing herself seriously complimented by some one who truly admires her. For two years he had been in the wilds of Africa where a man was valued as he showed courage, discipline, and approved himself a gallant and trustworthy officer.



As for personal beauty, he had forgotten he had any, for not seldom, days, weeks, months passed by without his stopping to do more than—after shaving himself in an absent-minded manner—give his face a hurried glance in a bit of looking glass, which comically elongated his features.

Ivo quickly recovered himself, ashamed to show that he was so pleased at being complimented about what he considered a small matter. To show that it was but a fleeting impression, he said with dramatic impressiveness:

“How can I describe a beautiful, artistic castle-villa, full of antiques, art-treasures, old tapestries, paintings—things Italians love—in a few minutes! ’Tis not to be done!”

“Oh, well, then, tell me how much the thing is worth, in dollars. That is what an American cares most to know about.”

“Imbecile!” exclaimed Ivo, before realizing that Harriet was trying to make a little joke this time at her own people’s expense. “You really deserve a black eye for teasing

a fellow so brutally, when, in a short time, we must part, perhaps forever!"

"Ah, angelo mio, I really would like to know what the villa is like. It is easy enough for me to picture an Italian terraced garden, full of all sorts of artistic creations—grottos, fountains, statuary—pebbly walks wrought in all kinds of fancy patterns, here and there covered with lattice work, embowered with every sort of vine. Flowers, of course, are everywhere charmingly placed; vases everywhere; great trees of many varieties—pine, palm, fig, olive, orange—plentiful, and which know where to disport themselves, show off their shapes or bear their fruit. But the villa itself, a castle-villa at that! You must really enlighten me, so that I can carry a good picture of it home in my mind's eye. Of what material was it built, and who was its architect?"

The idea of Harriet's wanting to carry home a picture of his home so pleased the Captain that he began enthusiastically to answer her questions, after he had tossed off from his

well-proportioned, artistically molded brow a curling lock of tawny gold.

“Oh, one of my ancestors drew the plans and supervised the work. The walls are of cement, mixed with rubbish of all kinds; hunks of lava from Mt. Etna, stones from everywhere, broken flower-pots, which in the cement have hardened, making walls so solid that they will never so much as crack—till doomsday.”

“Ah, an improvement on our walls, which not only crack, but tumble too often without warning. But, never mind! We shall yet build well and strong and swiftly—perhaps artistically—when our Edisons can take the time to evolve the right material and the right way to use it. Just now we are too busy making money to cultivate our home-making instincts. Well, I will take it for granted that your castle-villa is a joy to the eye and as substantial as artistic. But how about American improvements? Is it fitted up with those? Also I take it for granted that your help serves you like wise friends instead of envious, greedy enemies.”

"Yes, yes! They take themselves off when their work is done, and leave us in peace. As for American improvements, we are putting them in gradually. We already have gas in place of candles."

At this point in their conversation Harriet rose, exclaiming in her most business-like tones: "Time's up! I must be off! Father and I shall endeavor to see that wonderful Bruno Home a short year hence."

After pinning her hat in place, she drew her gloves from her bag and then approached Ivo's bedside.

That young gentleman seemed to be suddenly paralyzed. He lay on his bed quite motionless, while his countenance paled until he looked like a recumbent statue of Despair. Harriet, in spite of all her skillfully laid and well-executed plans, was not to get off so easy as she had imagined. She had expected a love-battle of some kind; but to see the gallant Captain in a perfectly helpless condition, seemingly as helpless as if dead, was decidedly a situation she had not prepared herself to



face, and endeavor to control. However, as she had been taught, first by her father, then by her own self, to "trust God and fear nothing," she boldly faced the pale image on the bed, saying:

"Wake up, Ivo! You are not going to sleep before you bid me good-bye, are you?"

These words roused Ivo from his stupor of despair. He said pathetically, "Harriet, mia, how can you joke when we are parting—in all probability never to see each other again?"

"Nonsense! If we live a decent, common-sense life, we shall likely both of us reach the normal century mark. Meanwhile we might meet again. So cheer up!"

"Harriet! You are such an idiot!" impatiently exclaimed Ivo, beginning to sob like a child. As, however, he felt her soft, yet firm hand caress his brow, he opened his eyes and gave her a glance so full of despairing anguish, that Harriet's eyes in spite of herself filled with tears, seeing which Ivo grasped both of her hands in a tight, apparently never-let-go-clasp, while he said pleadingly:

“Oh, madonna mia! One little promise before you go—to keep me alive. Promise me, O promise me, that you will be mine, soon—quickly! I, too, will learn business to please your father. I, too, will become a docile money-maker. I, too, will kneel to Mammon, for love of you!”

“You know not what you ask, Ivo. In a few years from now, I shall probably be a dried-up, money-making machine, with a mind concentrated on gain, a heart perfectly atrophied. My face, which appears comely now, will then be pale, drawn, repellent, with deep furrows of care in it; since, as someone has truly said, ‘It is impossible that anyone should have great and grave responsibilities without in some way showing their scars.’ You, on the other hand, developing along artistic lines, with your hand clasped in that of the Great Artist, will be handsomer than ever—if that is possible—ten years from now. You will be envied by men, adored by women. It would be a shame for me to take advantage of your immaturity now, and while, too, you are

ill. Besides, I have already given my word to my father that I will not wed so long as he lives. Since the desertion of my Italian mother, he has been both father and mother to me. Yes, indeed! for twenty-five years—a full quarter of a century—he has been devoted to me. To disturb our relations now would hasten his death. I would be his murderer—savez? ”

Captain Ivo, though much impressed by what Harriet had said, yet made haste to urge, “But I will wait—wait—wait! till doomsday, if it is necessary. Only give me the promise! Give it to me *now*. *Now* is the accepted time.”

“Ah, but you are young, *mon ami*. You will be considered a great match, when you are willing to dig up a few of your titles. Then, pardon me, you are so very handsome and charming. Best of all, there is your record for gallant behavior in the army and out. No, I shall not permit you to enter into any sort of engagement with an American business woman older than yourself. Good-bye! God bless you! My memories in connection with

my two Italian friends—more particularly with one of the two—who so gallantly saved my life, shall always be sacred to me; and I feel confident they will ever be the sweetest memories I am to know.”

Harriet withdrew her hands quickly from those of Ivo's, also quickly kissed him on his forehead, and almost before he was aware, had turned and reached the door. He just had time to hold out his arms and mutely beg her not to leave him in despair.

It did not occur to Harriet, trained as she was to business methods, to go back and unsay her parting words. Involuntarily, however, seeing his mute despair, she said, ere she crossed the threshold, and with great distinctness, “Ivo, *mio*, be as brave in love as you have been in war! Remember!”

Then the door closed and Ivo swooned dead away. In this condition he was found by the Lieutenant, whom Harriet promptly dispatched to his bedside.



## CHAPTER VI



*No man or woman can go through divorce proceedings without awful scars, and most candidates are ruined by the ordeal. Divorce is heroic treatment. It seeks to give relief from the results of a most unhappy accident—the mismating of a man and a woman.*

*There is only one thing more terrible than divorce, and that is to go through life manacled hand and foot, with an iron compress on head and heart.*

ELBERT HUBBARD.

## CHAPTER VI

**I**T is to be hoped that few men at the present time have developed so much antipathy to our present marriage and divorce system as Harriet's father, because it is likely to grow worse before it evolves into something better; and in the meantime people should marry and be given in marriage. To John W. White marriage was but another name for scandal, immense legal and alimony fees, and, far harder yet to bear, complete loss of reputation as a decent, domestic man; for Mr. White had had the courage to marry twice over and again twice over to speed swiftly through America's divorce mill to please two impatient young women eager to wed again.

His first unfortunate matrimonial venture had been with a society belle, a lovely bit of blond flesh, who found it easy to hypnotize herself into distracting love-infatuations.

Consequently this dazzling bit of femininity soon tired of solid, sober, serious John White, and in less than two years after her marriage with the "dull beast," she was conjuring her petty, bird-like brain as to the quickest—and most profitable—way to get rid of him. She imagined herself "just gone" on a young sporting man, so devoted, so different from the bear she had unwisely married.

Mr. White, being a high-bred gentleman, felt that he could do no less than promptly pave the way with gold leading from a hated marriage with himself to divorce, so that his wife could quickly remarry and secure bliss with another man, who was, she declared, her "soul-mate."

Mr. White himself was in no particular haste to wed again. He preferred to slavishly lose himself in business affairs, eschewing society utterly.

At thirty-five, however, having built up a huge business plant and accumulated a large fortune, he once more found himself "caring much" for another young woman, employed



by him as a typist. Under his training she developed into a very intelligent secretary, earning a large salary with which she not only supported herself but her old parents, and paid the college fees of a promising younger brother. She was a dark, handsome woman of Italian parentage, but having been in America since she was a little tot, both spoke and wrote English like a native. Her disposition was sympathetic and yielding. Indeed she tried to do that idiotic and impossible thing, viz., to please everybody.

Not until Mrs. White No. 2 had eloped did her deserted husband learn that his Leonora had wedded him solely to please her parents and her brother. A note left by her on his desk read as follows:

“DEAR MR. WHITE—How can you forgive me for leaving you as I have done? when, too, you have been so kind and generous to me and my relatives.

“But—God forgive me! I can no longer bear to live in my present state of awful anxiety. You see, my dear Adolphe is very ill, and threatens to blow his brains out, unless I leave ‘that American’ and come to

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him. He is in Italy, where I shall be as soon as I can get there. The tiny babe, which looks like you, I leave to help you forget me. Please get a divorce as quickly as possible, so that I can be married to my dear Adolphe.

“Yours very sincerely,

“LEONORA.”

The idea of having to go through the divorce mill a second time so wore on the spirit of the brooding, deserted Mr. White, that he thought seriously of taking the shortest route—that of suicide. For some reason, domestic infelicity and scandal bear far more heavily on men than on women. Indeed some women seem actually to enjoy posing as domestic martyrs, while a continuous stream of coin flowing ceaselessly into their coffers not infrequently makes new creatures of them—not exactly in the Lord, but in the matter of feeling equal to wedding men much younger than themselves.

It was wee Harriet who kept her father from resorting to so awful a method of obtaining divorce as the suicide route offered; and the way she did it was extremely simple:

merely hanging on for dear life to one of his fingers when she got the opportunity to catch on to it with her tenacious baby fingers. The soft, clinging hand of his child sent a thrill of pure happiness into the very citadel of his lonely being.

Presently the tiny creature had developed a broad smile in repayment for the sad but tender ones her father lavished upon her. Next she learned, "faster than any other baby," the nurse declared, to clap her hands and crow for joy as soon as Mr. White came into the nursery upon his return from business. But the baby stunt which captured his heart completely, or, rather, gave him a bran new one, was when the little creature began to shout, "Dad! Dad! Dad!" as soon as her wide-awake round eyes caught sight of him, after a more or less prolonged absence. He was sure no one had ever loved him so truly as his little Harriet: always ready to shout in joy, "Dad! Dad! Dad!" And how quickly did the little creature, by the use of such simple means, create a Paradise for Mr. White, where for-

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merly had been a wilderness, full of dead men's bones.

The fond father did not spoil the little creature, upon whom he bestowed the long, pent-up love of his nature—as, after many years, he bestowed upon her the bulk of his great fortune, gathered together by indomitable energy, perseverance and intuitive financial genius. On the other hand, he trained her to be like unto himself, a tireless worker and an original thinker; likewise a stoic in the business world; taught her to bear herself in crucial circumstances with the calmness and wisdom of a Greek philosopher, or, that of the best type of American business men, who it has been asserted, having lost one fortune, are ready and eager to stand up and have another tussle with fortune; and, if need be, still another, and still another.

While she was quite young and growing rapidly, physically, he selected for her an excellent private school where the scholars were not too many for their teacher to do ample justice to each pupil.



A bonafide Frenchman early became a member of Mr. White's household, to be supplanted by a German as soon as ~~over~~ his pupil could speak French "like a native." Later on her music teachers, vocal and instrumental, had a pretty clear field in which to initiate their pupil in their divine art, music, and likewise assist her to obtain a perfect pronunciation of the most harmonious and best tone-placing language of all—the Italian.

Finally, however, Mr. White shocked all his friends by having his only daughter—and heir to millions—finished, not in an aristocratic, fashionable boarding school, but in a thorough-going business college. Her diploma secured, he took her at once into partnership with himself, without so much as giving her a taste of society by way of a *début*. Next he taught her to "dress for business," as he expressed it; adding, "You cannot mix business successfully with the spirit of coquetry—which latter quality is easily aroused by bedecking yourself with feminine frills and furbelows. Always, in the morning, attire your-

self in a plain business suit, and forget during business hours that you are a woman."

In a short time she had learned to imitate so perfectly her father's grave, dignified, yet prompt and alert way of handling a multitude of business details, that it was frequently remarked by his employees, "Yes, she's a chip of the old block all right, and will make her mark in the business world, as he has made his."

gh And yet, though she had for several years done business just like a thoughtful, enterprising man during the business hours of each day, yet had she, his Harriet, at the mature age of twenty-five, fallen desperately in love just like any fashionable bred, romance-reading girl. True, she had done so in fair Italy, the home of Romeo and Juliet, of Petrarch and Laura, of Dante and Beatrice—where love is most ardent and thrilling, passionate, though sometimes meek and patient, as well as enduring.

The time when Mr. White's business-bred daughter did this most undesirable thing—to

fall in love—was during the last decade of the nineteenth century, that century which has done more for the emancipation of mankind from physical drudgery by the introduction of wondrous, almost intelligent, machinery, than all previous centuries combined.

The place where <sup>(uncompleted)</sup> has already been told; but it is worth repeating over and over, for with each repetition, what vast pictures fill the mind in connection with a city which neither fire, flood, nor earthquake, fierce hate, fierce greed, wanton luxury, fanatic religion, cruel, enervating pleasures, nor yet again frenzied ambition, with its never-ceasing clash of innumerable legions and armies, could wholly destroy. Yes, it was Rome, the Eternal City, who is to-day renewing her strong youth, aye, is already one of Europe's important capitals. Who knows but that in spite of her countless mistakes, followed always by sure-footed retribution, she is yet destined to become, in the glorious future, the capital of a united, kingdethroned Europe; thrilling our souls as a Mother of Peace, as she could never even have

bedazzled the eyes of past generations when she was the consummate mistress in the art of war.

But the ardent lover of Harriet is no longer in Rome. After months of silence, without even so much as a letter from his American madonna to cheer his hungry heart, he has at length crossed the wide ocean and hovers night and day about a certain old New York home in a quaint neighborhood. The house is filled with *objets d'art*, the gleanings of many a summer vacation in the Old World by Mr. White and Harriet, and members of the White family.

But at last patience and perseverance are rewarded, and Ivo and Harriet find each other, quite by chance. Harriet was walking swiftly, her mind full of her father, who was very ill, when, without warning, just as she turned a corner, who should she run into but Ivo himself! Each began hurriedly to "beg pardon," then straightway ran into each other again when they realized, "Why, it's Ivo!"—"Dio mio, it's you, Harriet, my lost love!"



After they had embraced and kissed in a conventional way, like brother and sister, they stood gazing into each other's eyes, when suddenly Ivo's face grew deadly pale. The next moment he had taken Harriet in his strong arms, muttering, "I mean to have the real thing now by way of kisses—after months of almost unendurable torture." Thus speaking he drew Harriet to him, and, quite regardless of consequences, he kissed first her brow twice, then her two eyes, her two cheeks, and finally he pressed on her sweet lips the long, passionate, clinging kiss of the Italian lover. Harriet being a business woman who never lost her head, soon protested and drew herself away, saying:

"My heavens, caro, you must not show your love for me so strenuously on the street. The police might take you for an escaped lunatic and arrest you."

Captain Bruno, or Conte Bruno, as he was usually called in Rome, laughed gayly as he remarked:

"Ugh, these cold New Yorkers! It will

## 90 AN AMERICAN MADONNA

not hurt them in the least to see that an Italian can make love as strenuously as they can<sup>make</sup> money, and get a thousand times more satisfaction by so doing. But how is the dear father?"

In an instant Harriet's face clouded over with anxiety. She put out her hand to Ivo in token of farewell.

"Heaven forgive me! He is very ill—perhaps on his deathbed. I was hurrying home when I ran into your arms. *Au revoir!*"

## CHAPTER VII



*Who believes in the home and the fireside and children most? On my heart, I believe it is, in this day and generation, and in this country, the man.*

*Who marries for money?*

*The woman.*

*For place? For position? For spite? For vanity? For convenience? For family reasons?*

*The woman.*

*Half the women I know are proud of the fact that they do not love their husbands, and do not even pretend to love them.*

*American women starving for romance! You're wrong, Prince Troubetsky, you're wrong. It is the American man who is starving and the American woman who is starving him.*

*WINIFRED BLACK in The American.*



## CHAPTER VII

**D**O not weep any more, my dear Harriet, but give me your undivided attention while I speak of a matter over which I have brooded much. I trust you will continue in your present sphere of usefulness for many years. You fill it well, and it would be hazardous to make a change—for thousands are dependent on our business being conducted properly. In order that you might some time be a great and shining light among the famous philanthropists of New York I have purposely refrained from being little more than a mere money-maker. Ah, yes, my Harriet, I have always been ambitious for you, and I have tried to educate you so that you can fill a large place in our great city—when I am gone. And to be sure that you will do so, I feel compelled to beg you to promise me, ere I die——”

“What is it, father, that I am to promise?”

Harriet asked, as her father hesitated, then stopped speaking altogether.

*"Promise—me—never—to—marry."*

For an instant these two, father and daughter, gazed steadfastly into each other's eyes. During that terrible fraction of time Harriet saw herself bidding adieu to a frenzied lover, to wifehood, motherhood—to womanhood itself! Saw herself evolving slowly but surely into a hard, grasping, loveless being, becoming at length a mere machine for the coining of money. But, nevertheless, perceiving that death was about to claim its victim, she quickly wound her arms about her father's neck, and, gazing into his eyes with the look he knew so well, and which said, plain as words, "You can trust me, father," then with distinct emphasis came unfalteringly:

*"I promise."*

Hearing these words, a smile lit up her father's countenance, and thus did Mr. White, millionaire, pass on, smiling!

The clock struck twelve as he breathed his last.

It was striking twelve one week later, when Harriet looked up from a note she had just finished writing to her lover. It had been extremely hard for her to frame the two short sentences of which it was composed, and the toilsome fruit of her labor was likewise hard. Harriet realized this fact clearly; but she said, by way of excuse, "'Tis better so. A cruel business should be finished with dispatch, else it becomes torture."

The note read as follows:

"DEAR IVO—I promised my father on his death-bed never to marry. Pray, forgive and forget me.

"Yours truly,

"HARRIET WHITE."

As her ardent lover glanced over this cold, short communication from the woman he had worshiped ever since he had first looked into her eyes, his heart was pierced through and through with an awful, deadly, depressing pain. Next it seemed to him his blood had turned to fire and was consuming him, while his brain became that of a madman, incapable of judging of things sanely and seeing them

truly. He fairly flew to his trunk, unlocked it with frenzied haste, tossed a pile of things pellmell on the carpet, then digging down to the bottom, he soon found what he was looking for—his pistol! For a moment his hot, bloodshot eyes examined it critically to see if it was in a condition to kill two people; for poor Ivo had reached the decision, instantaneously, as soon as the meaning of the cruel note had penetrated his brain, that since he and Harriet could not live together, they should die together. He thrust the pistol into one of his pockets. What to do next? It was useless to hang about her premises so early in the morning, so he dropped into a chair, and as he did so his eye fell on the cruel sheet of paper at his feet. He picked it up in frenzied rage, tearing it into bits with demoniacal glee, saying:

“Dio mio! if only I had that false, heartless creature in my grasp—like this bit of paper—how quickly I would destroy her—as I am now destroying her diabolical note!”

Having by this time made mince meat of



the paper, he blew the bits he held in his hand high into the air, when soon they were descending like snow-flakes. He watched them moodily until all had settled on the carpet, then rose and began walking with a swift stride through his suite of rooms, talking to himself, and wildly gesticulating.

“Yes, she has sold our love, born of Heaven, for gold—that base mistress, that blood-sucking vampire, which destroys men and nations, womanhood, and innocent little children. Oh, Golden Calf! wilt thy reign never end? Art not satisfied to wreck the greatest nations of the past but must also lay thy unholy, thy demoralizing, thy paralyzing grip on the New World—the New Hope of humanity? ’Tis even so, and high time my Harriet died! Since, when Woman, bearing in her breast the Heart of the people, renders hard this divine gift and then kneels by the side of father, husband, or son in homage to the Golden Calf, oh, then, is God betrayed anew! Oh, then again, must vengeance come! for man must reap what he sows! . . .

Ay, my Harriet must die and I must die with her. Chielo! I am already dead—already suffering the intolerable torments of hell! Why, then, try to drag about my hateful, befouling, putrefying shell of flesh one year—two—maybe—O God!—ten! . . . I cannot do it—and I will not attempt the impossible! . . . Perhaps,—who knows? but that in the sweet breast of Heaven pardon may yet be found for we two whom a cruel, Mammon-worshiping father has over-ruled, a bastard Fate outdone!”

Count Ivo Bruno was a strange blend, not of Jekyll and Hyde, but of Raphael and Cavalotti. For days together he would appear to be a charmingly well-done reincarnation of the amiable and ever adorable Italian artist, whose early death caused even the Pope of his time to weep bitter tears of anguish and disappointment over the premature end of his favorite artist and architect, and to realize that something Godlike had been removed that could not be replaced. Then, on a sudden, almost without warning, the Cavalotti side of

Ivo's character would be to the fore. Something would irritate him unduly. Bitter words would be spoken, the sequel of which might be a duel. Already he had four of these unfortunate affairs of honor, so-called, to his account. Also Ivo was like Felice Cavalotti in being an extreme Republican, and an ardent admirer of Mazzini. For a Pope he cared as little as the loving, amiable Raphael cared much.

“ Well, there's a chance that Harriet will go to her place of business to-day. These Americans never let anything interfere with their devotion to Mammon.”

So saying, he hurriedly put on his overcoat, jammed his hat over his eyes, took his gloves in his hand,—feeling unequal to putting them on,—and soon found his way to the street. He had gone but a short distance, however, before he felt extremely ill. There seemed to be plenty of air for Americans, to judge by the swift way they moved about, but none for him. He hurriedly pulled off his hat and fanned himself with it. All to no purpose.

He staggered a few steps and soon had fallen heavily on the sidewalk. A crowd quickly gathered about the prostrate, unconscious man, and many were the exclamations and comments before his body could be removed to a hospital.

“He’s dead drunk, sure!” mumbled a blear-eyed, frowzy-looking, red-nosed devotee of King Alcohol.

“Worse than dead drunk—dead! See the blood oozing from the cut in his temple!” commented a young girl with a look of awe on her sweet face.

“What have we here? A Greek god tumbled off his pedestal?” superciliously queried a dandified-looking youth drawing near.

“Looks like it! Gad! he *is* a handsome chap,” said another young fellow. “I wonder where he’s from, and where he got all that hair. I’ll bet he’s one of those foreign piano-playing fellows! They always have hair to beat the band—or, rather, to make the piano do terrific, hair-raising stunts. I suppose their strength comes to them via their hair, like Samson’s did.”



Here spoke up an Italian, shaking his head sadly as he remarked, "Dead on American liquor—a poisonous compound. *Dio mio!* Our Consul ought to see that every Italian gets a proper warning about the liquor they sell here. This makes the fourth Italian dead in a week from poisonous American drugs they call whisky."

"'Tis a murder!" solemnly asserted a thin, wiry-looking man in an emotional manner. "Somebody's knocked him on the head—and such a handsome head, too. Doubtless there's a woman at the bottom of this mess. D—n 'em!"

"Poor man!" sighed a tender New England spinster, as she walked bravely up to the bloody, prostrate man, and softly raising his head, put her warm fur muff beneath it. The weather was bitterly cold, the pavement icy. She had scarcely finished her act of mercy when an ambulance was driven up and some men alighted. Next the apparently lifeless body, prone on the sidewalk, was quickly deposited therein, after which the door of the

ambulance was slammed shut, the horses started off on a gallop, and the crowd dispersed as quickly as it had gathered.

Poor Ivo! It has been said with truth, "Plump a man down in the middle of New York, and a great bewilderment comes over him. He feels that he has somehow got out of a snug little corner into a great whirl that bewilders him, and makes him dizzy. He is uneasily conscious that he has been dwarfed to a mere atom; his complacency vanishes; he knows that his importance has shrunk into nothingness, and he doesn't like it. He resembles a small mouse that has crept timidly out into a vast hall, and then, appalled by the unwonted vista, scuds back to its hole with squeaks of genuine dismay."

However, the New York which had helped to befuddle and bewilder "Count Bruno, of Rome," was far less noisy and bewildering than the New York of to-day. At that time she had a population of not more than two millions; if, indeed, a true count could bring her within measurable distance of that number.

She classed herself rather timidly with the great capitals of the Old World. More timidly still did the New York of 1892 discuss the idea, broached by a few daring spirits—that of swallowing her nearest neighbors! One very earnest soul, who to-day would pose as a very modest one, asserted that any movement toward consolidation should come from the neighbors themselves; and that up to date they had shown no desire in that direction. This modest person even went so far as to affirm that the proposed union was merely the “fad” of a few men fond of publicity and ambitious of posing as benefactors of their generation! Of course there were the usual number of seers to declare the project “not practical.”

How exploded these ideas in the year of 1908-9, after the “fad” of consolidation with neighbors, big and little, on the part of New York has become so thoroughly practical that any opposition has long since been forgotten! Now that America’s metropolis has nearly doubled her two millions of inhabitants, all

her modest citizens are dead. Ask a New Yorker to-day how big he thinks New York will eventually be, and he answers without hesitation, "Thirty or forty millions, perhaps."

Notwithstanding New York's marvelous growth in the past and her big expectations in the future, she yet has a thorn in her side, called Chicago—in spite of the fact that Chicago, up to date, numbers no more than 1,982,000. Ah, but the prophet is always with us, and while we pooh! contemptuously at what he says, he makes the thorn in the side of an ambitious New Yorker rankle, especially when he affirms so stoutly: "Some day—and that period is not far distant—~~when~~ Chicago will rank ahead of New York and London. Chicago is located in the very heart of the nation. It is the natural marketing place for food-stuff; the territory belonging to the city produces more grain than the balance of the world combined; Chicago's climate is not very severe; once on a level with the lake, the city now rests high above it; that is the result of energy, and it is energy that is going to make Chicago the world's chief city. There is little



doubt that in another decade Chicago will be sending ships to the great oceans by way of the Mississippi River to the south, and the St. Lawrence to the east. Long ago her merchants began taking away from New York much of the business going to Mexico, the Central American republics and Cuba; they are now reaching out for the Oriental trade; New York and London had better look ahead!"

Having listened thus far, the New Yorker with the thorn rankling sore in his side turns away muttering, "The devil take Chicago!"

But later in the day his heart is cheered by some school-children singing joyously verses by Ida Prinhoff about his "dear little old New York":

To thee, first city of our land,  
    With hearts and voices blending,  
We raise a loyal song of praise,  
    In strains of love unending.  
We praise thy harbors, and thy ships,  
    Thy bays renowned for beauty,  
Thy parks with statues bravely decked,  
    To tell of faith and duty.

## CHORUS

New York, New York, our city loved,  
To thee in praise we sing,  
Let every loyal heart and voice  
Its loving tribute bring.

We sing the praise of the Dutchman's day;  
We chant of Englanding;  
We tell the growth of wealth and trade  
And freedom's cause unfolding.  
We praise thy heroes, dead and gone,  
We praise thy heroes living;  
We rally 'round each patriot's shrine,  
A heartfelt tribute giving.

[CHORUS]

Thy civic growth we praise in song,  
Our joyous voices blending;  
We pledge our hearts, our heads, our hands  
To make thy growth unending,  
And may thy spirit still prove true  
On earthly fields victorious,—  
Still fire thy sons in days of strife  
To make thy banner glorious!

[CHORUS]

## CHAPTER VIII



*I have heard the statement vouched for by very eminent ecclesiastics of the Catholic Church—that, even in the cloister, there comes a time in the life of the most devout religieuse when she finds with dismay that her existence is becoming quite intolerable, when her best loved duties fail to interest her, and when a mysterious lassitude creeps over her mind and body. She, in her innocence and inexperience, does not understand its meaning, but her superiors do. They know it to be the crise, the mighty instinct of womanhood crying out within her, and they dread the outcome; for with many nuns it assumes the form of physical decline and ends in early death.*

M. HUYSMANS.



## CHAPTER VIII

**A**FTER Harriet had posted her note to her lover, acquainting him with the fact that she had promised her dying father never to marry, she went to a certain room in which were hung exquisitely finished copies of some of Raphael's sweetest madonnas, together with a wonderfully exact reproduction of his "The Sposalizio," the original of which, painted by Raphael when he was but twenty-one, proclaimed him to be "a finished painter." Here were also fine copies of madonnas by other great masters.

Harriet's grief since her father's death had been of the dry-eyed kind, so hard to bear, and at the same time so dangerous to health and sanity. Hitherto, she had been able to face life's sorrows with calmness, if not serenity; but they had been mere scratches and simple bruises. Not until now had she faced separa-

tion from a beloved person: final separation. Under the circumstances to be obliged to give up an idolized father and an adored lover both at the same time, this, one must admit, was a knockdown blow for even a strong and brave woman.

As Harriet entered the "Madonna Room," her glance fell first on her copy of the painting known in the original as the "Madonna della Sedia," "which has in it more of the wonderful calm that environs the soul of a child at home than any other madonna picture." Some of this same wonderful calm seemed to steal softly into poor Harriet's heart, and to sweetly soothe her anguished being as she continued to gaze first upon this charming madonna—whom she herself resembled later on—and whose countenance fairly shone with the spirit of happy, triumphant motherhood—then at her child; who had evidently been sleeping in its mother's arms, but awakening suddenly, opens wide its eyes, as if surprised at what it sees and dimly comprehends, being still lost in dreams.

Next, her glance sought the "Sposalizio." Ah, that picture! how it recalled, in the twinkling of an eye, the many, many happy dreams it had given birth to, as from time to time her glance had rested upon it—for the reason that since Harriet had parted from her Italian lover, she had seemed to see Ivo as the happy bridegroom, instead of Joseph, and herself as bride, in place of Mary. Now this picture, bringing back so poignantly those happy dreams of happier days, had a wonderful effect on Harriet's imprisoned tears: of their own free will they gushed forth from some hidden source, some hitherto sealed fountain, and gratitude filled her soul. She was saved!

Harriet dropped on her knees beside the sofa underneath this picture—so full of life, love, artless grace, and the happy, reposeful spirit of Raphael—and lifted up her heart in thanksgiving, an easy exercise when one's parched soul has been rejuvenated by gentle, refreshing showers of tears.

A new day had dawned ere Harriet raised her bowed head and rose from her knees. Her

countenance, though very pale, shone with peace and with a determination to fill the place which Duty had marked out for her unshrinkingly and with serenity.

Harriet next proceeded to make a careful toilette, for she meant to surprise her "Family of Friends" by acting like her old self once more; that is, bear herself as her father had taught her to be—strong, brave, level-headed, serene.

Mr. White's "Family of Friends," now Harriet's, had been her father's way of solving *his* servant's problems, which for fifteen consecutive years he had found harder to handle than his multifarious and absorbing business affairs.

It was an "extra good cook" who sharpened his domestic wits to that extent which enabled Mr. White to undertake a reform in the matter of housekeeping, and to evolve a real home for all concerned. Although the Irish woman could really cook in an accomplished manner, having been trained at a first-class cooking-school, she yet had two bad traits



of character, viz., a vicious temper and a tendency to an occasional spree. When in her cups Bridget usually had the good sense to retire to the servants' quarters, giving as an excuse "a head on me belike to burst." On this fateful evening, however, she had not done so because her assistant in the culinary department "had no head at all," according to Bridget. So it happened that when it came time to carry in the roast goose, she gave Nora a kick for some imagined insult, and attempted to perform the feat herself. Staggering into the dining-room, where Mr. White, his daughter, Harriet, and her tutor were seated at the table awaiting a change of plates, she attempted to land the big, heavily-loaded platter on the table near Mr. White. Instead of doing so, at the critical moment her knees weakened, the roast goose took refuge in Mr. White's lap, while Bridget managed to keep herself from landing on the floor by clutching at his sleeve.

In an instant Mr. White lost his temper—quite a necessary thing to retain in dealing

with drunken people having vicious dispositions. He said, brutally, his eyes flashing, "Take yourself off, you drunken beast!" The cook silently obeyed—in order that she might the more quickly fill her capacious pockets with "cooking eggs," the most of which had, so far, turned out to be actually rotten. The belligerent woman, doubly "loaded," was now quite ready to attack "that baste of a millionaire and give 'im a lisson." As soon, therefore, as she caught sight of the boss, she let fly an egg which approved itself quite the worse for storage—either by some deceived hen or graft-seeking person—for it popped with a loud report as it came in contact with one of Mr. White's not by any means calm, placid orbs. The battle was now on in dead earnest, Mr. White being as determined to give Bridget "an experience she would not forget to her dying day," as Bridget was set on giving "that baste of a millionaire a lisson." As soon as Mr. White could see once more, he remained in the dining-room just long enough to arm himself with the carving knife and to

say to Harriet's tutor, "Get me my pistol." Then he rushed after the cook, who, meanwhile, had let fly two more eggs of doubtful goodness, one of which had landed on the back of his head and the other on his white collar. When Bridget saw Mr. White pursuing her with a long, sharp knife, she gave a yell that brought every servant in the house quickly within eye range of the two flying combatants. They found it impossible not to scream with merri-ment as they saw their dignified "Boss"—head yellow with egg—armed with a carving knife, the front of his trousers slimy with goose gravy, and the rest of him—clothes and boots—besmirched with bad egg *débris* rushing upstairs and down after the egg-armed, drunken Bridget, who, notwithstanding the fact that she was "loaded," seemed to defy a close attack by landing an egg at the right moment and at the right spot, preferably an eye already the worse for (egg) wear. What Bridget hoped to be able to do, now that Mr. White had got his "lisson," was to reach her room and barricade herself within. She counted on

his being too proud to call in a policeman, and once behind a solid, barred door, she could hope to make "reasonable terms, bein' as she was a cook in a thousand."

On the other hand, Mr. White was quite as determined that Bridget Murphy should never remain another night in his house. Consequently, he pursued her perseveringly, all lathered with gravy and battered with egg from top to toe as he was, cleverly heading her off from her attempts to reach the servants' quarters, until finally she managed to reach the street door. Here she let fly a couple of eggs, the aim of which was so clever that she was enabled to unlock it and reach safety in the street under cover of darkness.

By this time Mr. White's pistol was placed in his hand by Harriet herself, who thought all danger past with the disappearance of Bridget. She was somewhat mistaken, for her father, looking like something diabolical, made himself appear still more formidable by shouting, as he held the pistol cocked in his hand:



"Now, every servant in this house clear out! I give you just ten minutes to put your things on and be gone."

Believing that the boss had gone "clean crazy," they lost no time in doing as they were bid—and wisely. Had they tarried, one or more might have carried away some well-directed shot. Meanwhile, Harriet and her tutor, whom she lovingly called "Uncle Jerry," his real name being Jeremiah Jordan, had been employed throwing open windows and doors. Next they set themselves to remove from elegant, expensive carpets, from rich antique furniture, from fine paintings, from cherished heirlooms, egg debris, of which there seemed no end, the cook's pockets having been capacious and her aim multitudinous.

At this time Harriet was a miss of fifteen, and though she felt "so sorry for poor papa," she found it impossible not to laugh when an egg popped louder than usual. As for timid Jeremiah Jordan, as perfect a bookworm as ever lived, he, early in the fray, betook himself to his private library, where he securely

locked himself in with his beloved books. Not until Harriet came to his door and announced that the last departing giggling servant was locked out of the house, did he dare show himself; and then in his most worn suit of clothes. Had the cook but tossed an egg at one of his books—as she had flung many a one at Mr. White—he would have collapsed.

As for John W. White, millionaire, he lost no time in seeking his bathroom with fresh linen, a different pair of trousers, a spotless vest, another necktie and a dressing-gown. Never before had he remained locked fast in this narrow room so long as on this occasion, and never before had he reappeared looking so thoroughly depressed, so abjectly wilted. True, he permitted Harriet to lead him to a well-prepared midnight lunch; but he sat in his seat oblivious of outside matters. Indeed, so profound were his cogitations, that Harriet and her Uncle Jerry, fearing to disturb him, either talked low or not at all.

That night John W. White, millionaire, solved *his* servant problem.

## CHAPTER IX



*Recall the best of the "good times" that you have had in any company. If you will carefully consider the secret of that golden hour—the secret of the most delightful good fellowship that you ever enjoyed in your life—you will find that it lay in the fact that all the members of your pleasure party met on a footing of absolute equality. Nobody patronized or condescended, and no one fawned or flattered; but each felt that he gave to the company precisely as much as he took away. "In good company," says a famous writer on manners, "everybody is of the same age."*

**CHARLES FERGUSON** in *The American*.



## CHAPTER IX

**N**OW did Mr. White solve his servant problem? In the simplest manner. Having rid his house of every servant by the aid of a cocked pistol, and while presenting an appearance more yellow and sensational than any pictures our yellow press can hope to produce, he refused to take back any of the old, or to employ fresh ones. Because, while wrestling with a question that, like Banquo's ghost, had refused to be laid ever since his first marriage, a happy thought struck him which he hoped to be able to make practical. It was this: Why not evolve a real home, employing equals to assist, instead of trying to maintain a petty kind of aristocracy, as heretofore?

But who would co-operate with him in this home project? In imagination he scanned all the intelligent, highly educated, independent women he knew. One by one they were re-

jected as having some characteristic or incompatibility of taste or temper which made them ineligible for such an enterprise, the chief objection being that they were not of a domestic turn: did not *love* home duties.

It was just when Mr. White was at his wits' end that he said suddenly, "The Twins! What is the matter with them?"

In his mind's eye he reviewed their past. He first saw them as tiny maids, being reared in the sweetest, neatest, prettiest, and most home-like of homes he ever remembered to have visited, either as boy or man. He recalled how awkward he had been during his first visit to their brother "Jim"; how he had persisted in calling Celia "Delia," and Delia "Celia," and all because they were dressed just alike, and he was too bashful to really look at either of them. He saw them again when they graduated, and again he blundered, calling Celia "Delia," and Delia "Celia," as before! How stupid they must think him! He was at that time, however, making money hand over fist, in "little old New York," proving that he was

not exactly stupid in America's great game of money-making.

The next time Mr. White saw "The Twins" was when they came to his central place of business. They were dressed in deep mourning, and their visit had to do with money: how best to invest some inherited from their father's estate. Mr. White gave them excellent financial advice, and on this visit was able to clearly distinguish which was Celia and which Delia—for Celia was thin and her features were drawn and haggard: she looked prematurely the New England spinster, tall, angular, gaunt, but neat, pensive, reticent—while her sister had a good color, and was optimistic, wide-awake, and her muscular frame was comfortably cushioned with flesh.

As Mr. White bowed the sisters out, he said to himself, "I'll warrant that Celia Taylor has been going through Love's threshing machine at a lively pace, judging by her looks. I must make inquiries."

He did so, and learned that the day previous to the one on which she was to be wed,

Celia had been so trustful as to hand all her savings as a teacher in a young woman's college to her lover for reinvestment. He knew of some New York real estate which, promptly secured by the sum she possessed, would, in no long time, be very valuable. Poor Celia! She never saw her lover again. As for her tidy nest-egg, honestly earned and saved with wonderful self-denial, that too disappeared for good, Celia Taylor being too proud to attempt to locate either absconding lover, or to get back again the money which proved his ruin.

But while she made no outward demonstration of the woe that had overtaken her, she grew thin, became absent-minded, and performed her duties as a teacher perfunctorily. Day by day life became a great burden. Often while alone she sighed and wished she could hide away in some lonely retreat where young eyes could not follow her, or curious tongues question her, or anxious friends torment her with well-meaning but utterly useless advice. She thought of suicide, but hesitated to go hence before she was called. Then, too, she



must not leave a heritage of woe for her twin sister to bear; and so Celia kept on teaching and growing thinner and sadder day by day.

Her sister, Delia, meanwhile was being courted by a millionaire, twice her age. She had long been intimate with the millionaire's wife; often, with Celia, spending happy vacations with her. At length the wife died, after living with her husband an ideal married life for many years. The poor bereft husband knew not how to face life—alone! True, he had married children; but their own affairs, domestic, social, and financial, absorbed and filled their lives. The old millionaire got to calling around occasionally at the boarding-house of the Twins. Here Miss Delia was always ready to entertain him and make him feel more like himself; make him feel that life was still worth living. In due time he proposed and was accepted. Together they planned a wedding tour around the world, which was to include poor Celia.

But before the day set for their marriage arrived, Delia was shocked to learn that her lover

had been cruelly murdered by one of his sons, who, "in his cups," had become obsessed with the idea that his mother's memory must not be disgraced by the marriage of her husband to a woman half his age.

It was now Delia's turn to sigh for some dear, quiet spot where she and her equally unfortunate sister could hide away from curious eyes, and too often cold hearts, and endeavor to resurrect their happier selves.

Accordingly, when Mr. White made his call upon the Twins, they were quite ready to listen to his scheme of making a home with intelligent, highly educated, conscientious, home-loving people as assistants and co-workers. But before deciding, many questions were asked.

"What sort of a man is Jeremiah Jordan, who, it appears, is already a member of your household?" asked Delia.

"Pooh! he's nobody!" said Mr. White unguardedly.

The sisters smiled, recalling that Mr. White had just said the proposed home-builders were

to be "intelligent, highly educated, conscientious and home-loving people."

Celia remarked laughingly, "It appears we are to have a fool to afford us relaxation."

"Beg pardon! Jeremiah Jordan is nobody's fool. He is a very learned man. When I said, 'he's a nobody,' I meant to give the impression that he is quite a harmless creature, so far as women are concerned. Probably a year will pass before he will get up the courage to look either one of you in the face without trembling."

"Why, what is the matter with him?" both sisters asked together, being now quite interested, and wondering what sort of a man this Jeremiah Jordan could be,—afraid to look at two plain women, like themselves.

"Oh, his wife some time ago put him through the divorce mill, claiming that he looked too often upon the rosy cheeks of the soprano singer in his choir. Since that time he has never, I think, really looked at any woman!"

"Was he really guilty—a minister of the

blessed Gospel?" asked Delia, with a look of awe on her face.

"Not a bit of it. His wife tired of being the consort of a poorly paid minister. As a very pretty woman, she easily got a rich bachelor friend of her husband's infatuated with her charms. The rest was easy—to secure a divorce by the aid of the bachelor's money."

"What became of her?"

"Oh, in less than a year after she had got her decree, the bachelor was no longer a bachelor, while she herself was a second time a bride, this time with a wardrobe fit for a princess."

"Of course his career as a minister of the Gospel was ruined," said the sad Celia.

"To be sure; but what does that matter, provided a woman can get an unlimited supply of clothes?"

"How you talk! So this poor Jeremiah is to be one of our home-builders! And you think him a harmless man?"

"Quite so! having transmuted his affection for human beings into a passion for books and



book lore! True, he is fond of his pupil, Harriet, and goes to no end of trouble to condense for her use voluminous old books containing a few kernels of sound wisdom in a bushel of chaff. Oh, yes, he is accommodating with everybody. He will do chores for you—a reasonable amount—accompany you and your sister to the opera, theater, concert hall or church—evening service—when you need a male escort. He has even made a tour of the world, to please Harriet and myself. We thought he needed a change, so we insisted that he accompany us. Of course we made it appear that we needed his services—else he would never have left his beloved books to the care of servants for three whole months.”

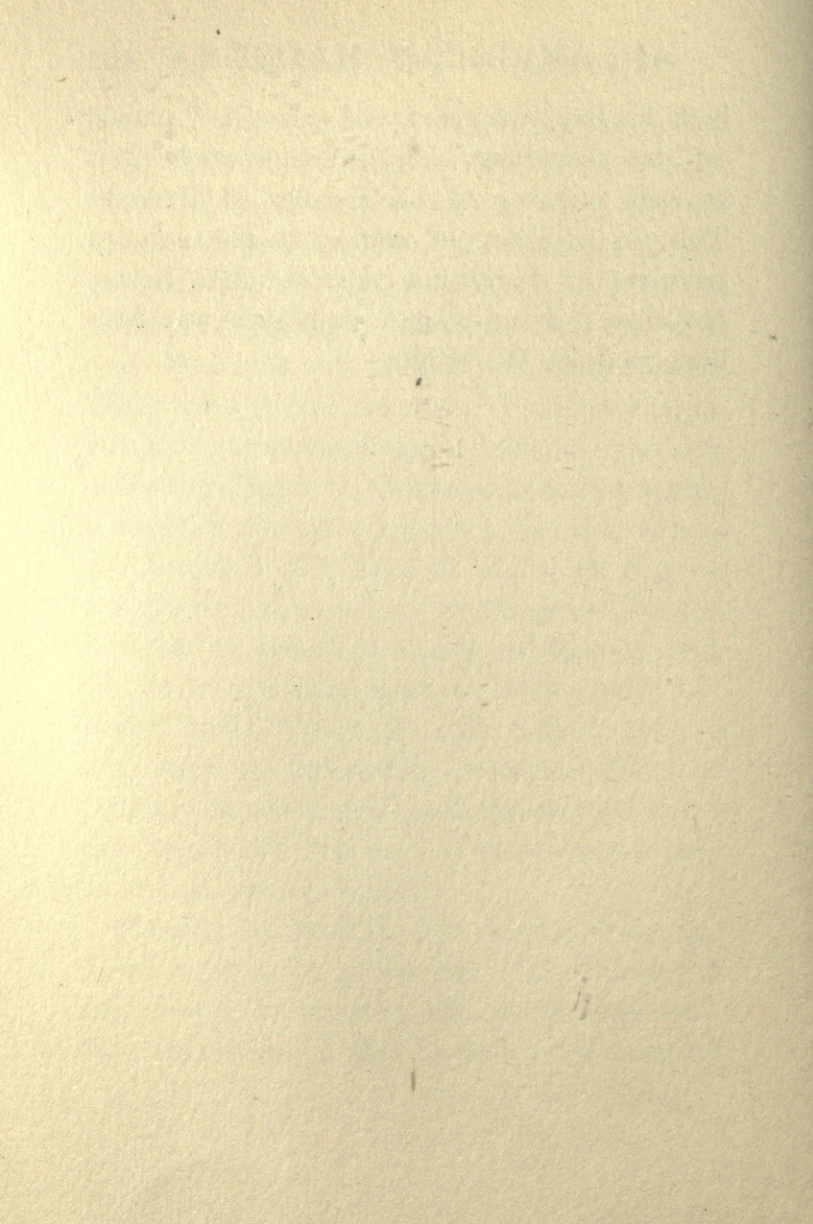
“How will your young daughter like the new arrangement?”

“She will like anything that pleases me. My Harriet is the best trained girl you ever saw. I raised her alone, you might say; and to educate her properly, I had first to educate myself. A hundred books at least I have pored over to get ideas—scientific ones—as to the

best way to evolve and train that mysterious thing called the intellect, and that—I sometimes think—more mysterious thing, the human body, because if one mismanages the development of the latter, so that instead of obtaining a normal growth, we have an abnormal one—then look out! the devil's to pay, usually. Well, think the matter over. I will only stipulate that our home is not to have any servants in it when *I* am in it. Get experts to thoroughly renovate the house every week, but throw them out before I get home at night, so that we can dine in peace and say anything we like, and feel that we are all of an age, all friends; and, for Heaven's sake, give us plain, easily digested food! Put it all on the table at once, so that when we are seated, we can undisturbed leisurely chew our food and undisturbed enjoy the delights of that sort of conversation only to be had among equals."

Having so spoken, Mr. White bade the Twins adieu. In a few days Mr. White got the answer he wanted and never regretted. He often declared that his last years were his

best, his happiest years, and when he "passed on," ten years later, he left a handsome bequest to each member of his Family of Friends. This, in addition, of course, to the prompt payment of handsome salaries while living. No close "living-wage" employer was Millionaire John W. White.





## CHAPTER X



*Southern simplicity carried to its ultimate expression, leads not uncommonly to startling results; for it is not generally a satisfaction to an Italian to be paid a sum of money as damages for an injury done. When his enemy has harmed him, he desires the simple retribution of putting him to death, and he frequently exacts it by any means he finds ready to hand. Being simple, he reflects little, and often acts with violence. The Northern mind, capable of vast intricacy of thought, seeks to combine revenge of injury with personal profit, and in a spirit of cold, far-sighted calculation, reckons up the advantages to be got by sacrificing an innate desire for blood to a civilized greed of money.*

*Dr. Johnson would have liked the Romans—for in general they are good lovers and good haters, whatever faults they may have.*

MARION CRAWFORD.

## CHAPTER X

**I**N addition to Mr. White's "Family of Friends," embracing the Twins, Jeremiah Jordan and Harriet—the latter now approaching the breakfast table—there were present this morning two other individuals, a handsome young woman being one, whose father was a Hebrew, while her mother claimed English descent. There was nothing in the appearance of this highly-vitalized, dark-haired, robust maiden, not yet out of her teens, to indicate that her extraction was other than that which has given us our biblical heroes and heroines; also our devil. In the White Family of Friends she was but a passing guest, though, being related to the Twins, and being also ~~of~~ a very energetic, let-me-help-you kind of person, she was ever ready to do a good turn, and particularly so while the White family was so worn with

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grief. Hence the presence of sweet Lucy Myers.

The other person present might almost be considered a member of the White Family of Friends, for he had filled the place of manager in Mr. White's business affairs for some years, and was on such terms of intimacy with his employer and Harriet, that a plate at the table was always laid for him and a charming room ever at his command. His real name was William Watterson Brown; but to Mr. White he had long been "Bill," to Harriet "Uncle Billy," while the Twins and Jeremiah ceremoniously spoke of him—or addressed him—as "Mr. Brown."

In appearance Mr. Brown looked wonderfully like President Taft. He was built after the same generous pattern—his smile being quite as ready, broad and genial. "Bill" could do a prodigious amount of work, smiling all the time. Perhaps that is the reason, though he attributed it to the fact that he lived the life of a sensible man after he had locked the door of his counting-room at close of day. Mr.



Brown had no end of funny stories and jokes in his repertoire, but there was one he always told with lively zest. Of course he was the young hero of his tale, which he never related without wondering how he ever got the courage to do it.

It seems that a couple of his boy friends dared him to kiss some girls on their way home from school in the big city of New York. They assured him that each of them would, afterwards, kiss two to his one. Billy Brown well knew that he had the name of being the most bashful boy in his school, and he had meant for some time to retrieve his character in this respect; so he replied bravely:

“Agreed!” and took his stand where some of the prettiest girls must presently pass. Up came a dimple of a maiden. Billy kissed her so quick that she did not have time to blush, much less protest. The next to come his way was a petite blonde, called “Spitfire.” But he kissed her just the same, and got spit on for his pains. Here he weakened somewhat and took counsel with himself as to whether

he should now stop or make a good kissing record while he was about it. He concluded to go on, notwithstanding the next girl loomed up a head higher than himself and was dressed to kill. Of course she slapped him for all she was worth, then passed around the corner. A whole bunch of girls came next. Billy kissed them double quick. Every one screamed to beat the band and ran away, but, quite undaunted, Billy turned to kiss the next—or a bunch—having by this time got well broken in. But, alas, the next was Retribution, wearing the form and features of his teacher. He felt himself taken by the nape of the neck or the collar of his coat, he could never remember which, for his brains were so befuddled by the shaking that followed, that it was not easy for him to clearly recall anything that happened for a week afterwards. Billy Brown always finished his kissing tale by solemnly affirming that, with the exception of blood relations, he had never kissed girl or woman from that day to this! Hisses and groans on the part of the men often followed this assertion, and weak

applause on the part of the women, though sometimes, to punish him, an audacious woman would make a rush for his big head, throw her arms about the strong neck, and give him a half a dozen loud smacks, pretending when she was through that they came from Billy Brown, who was practicing his old kissing stunt; and then ready to pose as a saint! Billy Brown would make the neat reply that he didn't care what he was accused of—just so he got the kisses!

Yes, Billy Brown was a bachelor of the type whom all women like, and feel perfectly at home with. Why had he never married? No one knew precisely, but there was a persistent rumor to the effect that at an early date he had had a love-affair which prematurely closed much like that of Washington Irving's.

That Billy Brown had a tender heart may be inferred from his remarks in respect to Harriet before her tardy entrance into the dining-room for breakfast on the morning after her night vigil in the Madonna Room.

He said in that emphatic way of his when deeply in earnest:

"I say a woman ought to be permitted to cry whenever she feels like it. Tears are a woman's safety-valve. I've told White many a time he had no right to make a business stoic out of his Harriet—or any other woman: that what we needed in our business grind of to-day was an infusion of the spirit of Chivalry, turning it into Romance, and that we could not get it so long as we demand of woman machine-like docility, refuse her a living wage, and murder her ideals by playing the part of beast to her."

Before any one could reply to this long speech—for Billy—Harriet stepped in and after greeting each member with her usual smile and nod, took her seat. All felt an immense relief to see her seated at her regular place at the table once more; the first time for a month.

"My dear, *dear* Boss," said Billy Brown, laying his big, fat palm on hers, "you are better. Thank God!"



"Yes," replied Harriet, returning his look of intermingled affection and anxiety with a brave one, "Divine Compassion has replaced my heart of stone with one of flesh. I am all right."

"Thank Heaven!" ejaculated Delia. "I feared—I know not what. You have been so unlike yourself since the death of your father. It is a sane admonition, 'Little children, keep yourselves from idols.'"

Harriet said nothing for a moment, and then with a meditative air murmured, "Wise Aunt Delia, what you say is true; and, perhaps, now that I have less temptation to break so excellent a biblical command, I may be able to keep it. By the way, what is in the morning papers—any new mysterious murder been perpetrated—or spicy love letters—or a divorce scandal that promises to be remunerative to all but the moneyed victim?" asked Harriet, trying to be cheerful.

"No," sighed, rather than spoke Celia. She was not only a newspaper fiend, but a yellow press fiend. No divorce scandal, no matrimo-

nial mix-up, no blood-curdling murder, embracing columns set up in blurred, small type, was ever too formidable for her to begin and read conscientiously to the very end, court proceedings and all.

It was Billy Brown who said, with some hesitation, "I don't know whether I ought to mention it or not, Harriet——" He stopped suddenly and looked frowningly at his plate, then swallowed some coffee.

Harriet's very heart stood still. She knew in a moment that something dreadful had happened to Ivo, and that he was afraid to tell her what it was.

"Oh, yes, I know something, too, that will interest you, Harriet," recklessly blurted out Delia.

"What is it, Aunt Delia?" queried Harriet, well knowing she could get a more detailed report of what had befallen her Italian lover from her than from Uncle Billy.

But Billy having given her a wink, she spoke guardedly. Naturally it was written up in a sensational manner—how a strikingly hand-

some Italian had been found lying on the pavement, quite unconscious and bleeding profusely from a bruise on the forehead. It was thought he must have been knocked on the head by some Black Hand fiend. "From letters in his pocket it appears his name is Count Ivo Raffaello Bruno of Rome."

An awkward silence followed this piece of information. At length Billy got up the courage to look at Harriet, and noticing how very pallid was her countenance, said, *sotto voce*, "Shall I order the carriage and drive you around to the hospital where this Count has been taken? That is the quickest way to know exactly what has occurred."

"No—not now. I want, first, to hold a consultation with my dear Family of Friends before making any new move having to do with Ivo. My last communication was the note apprising him of my promise to my dying father never to wed, and praying him to forgive and forget me."

"Yes, I remember, and I felt sure at the time there'd be the devil to pay. Thoroughbred

Italians in love—like the one you have got on your hands—are hot stuff. One can't handle them like they can Americans. We may all be murdered in our beds before we get out of this scrape. I told White so; but he said the risk was greater to you and all concerned to let you marry this sprig of the Roman aristocracy, than to make it impossible by a death-bed promise."

Harriet said nothing more, but sat silent and thoughtful until she perceived that all had finished their meal. Then she said, rising:

"Dear friends, let us retire to the Madonna Room. I want your advice on a very serious matter, which concerns the happiness of us all."

"All come but Lucy," said Billy affectionately, "because we are going to hammer some sound sense into Harriet's poor, topsyturvy brain. You know she's in love, and therefore a blind fool. We can't have your lovely, sympathetic face present. Go to the piano and practice your music."

"Oh, I prefer to do the dishes for my good aunts."



"You will make some man a mighty good wife some day," commented Billy, as he followed Harriet's lead.

"Be sure and slip my rubber gloves over those lovely hands," warned Delia as she lightly kissed the fine brow of the maiden with its artistically curved eyebrows. Then she followed the rest up stairs, sighing heavily. Could it be possible that Harriet was so slavishly in love with her Italian count as to be ready to break her promise to her dying father—then turn her back on all hitherto dear to her; render null and void the long training for a responsible position, and fly to Europe at the beck of a man she could know little about? It looked like it. Women in love were really insane. And Delia sighed again, deeper than before.

## CHAPTER XI





*The woman of the twentieth century will not only have learned many things, she will have forgotten many also—the feminine as well as the anti-feminine foolishness of the present day.*

*She will desire the happiness of love with her whole being. She is delicate and refined, not because she is chlorotic, but because she is healthy and red-blooded. She is sensuous because she is full of soul, and truthful because she is proud. She demands great love because she gives love with a still greater passion. Through her refined idealism the erotical problem will be very complicated and often difficult to solve. Therefore, the happiness she will give and feel will be deeper, richer and more lasting than anything hitherto called happiness. Many traits belonging to the wife and mother of to-day will be very likely missing in the woman of the twentieth century. She will always remain a sweetheart and only as such will she become a mother. She will devote her noblest and strongest forces to the difficult and beautiful art of being sweetheart and mother in one: her religion will be to create the Bliss of Life.*

**ELLEN KEY of Copenhagen.**



## CHAPTER XI

THE “Madonna Room,” toward which the White Family of Friends are directing their steps, was Harriet’s idea, worked out very cautiously ever since she was quite a young girl with a fondness for madonnas holding the chubbiest of babies. It was located in the third story, and in the preparation of this magnificent room—for works of art—no expense had been spared. Ever since Harriet was a small maid, her father had let her spend her allowance as she chose. Curiously enough it nearly all went to gratify her love for art and the strong maternal instinct inherited from her Italian mother. Every year, for a dozen years or more, a new madonna, sometimes two, found its way to this large, palatial art room. Quite a number of fine paintings, not of the madonna description, had been removed in order to make room for the ever-increasing

virgin mothers and their babes. The ceiling was an artistic creation of exquisitely tinted, charmingly grouped clouds and cupids. Some of the winged love-archers were in the act of arming themselves with bows and arrows and darts; others, already prepared to transfix hearts, were descending earthward. All the round little faces shone with love, and their pink, chubby, nude bodies were also a delight to the eye. The floor was laid with softly tinted tiles in classical design. Rich rugs reposed at various intervals throughout the room, noticeably before sofas or easy chairs. A couple of inlaid, antique tables added splendor to the appearance of this remarkable Madonna Room.

The quintet of people, having entered on this scene, seated themselves rather close together. Then all looked at Harriet as if to say, "Why have you brought us to a place filled with mothers holding chubby children, when you are doomed to celibacy?"

As for Harriet, she fastened her gaze on Billy Brown, seated in the biggest, most com-

fortable chair the room held, and said: "Uncle Billy, you have dropped some remarks which have led me to believe that you know why my father exacted a death-bed promise from me not to marry. Please tell us what you know."

All eyes were immediately focussed on the large man in the great "throne-room chair," looking rather uncomfortable. He jerked out, rather than said:

"I—I must admit—that poor White—and I—talked over this love affair of yours—for a Roman aristocrat, a time or two. Your father said—that—as his Harriet had been a docile daughter, he knew well enough she'd be a docile wife. That meant," he said, "the throwing to the dogs his long training which had made of his Harriet just the right person to fill his shoes when he was gone. Besides, as the docile wife of a European aristocrat, that meant that Harriet's money would be lost at gaming tables, in rebuilding and refurnishing old, decaying castles, paying an army of servants, giving and attending balls, riding in

automobiles, attending races, while poor Harriet herself must give up home, friends, country, religion, and see her children reared aristocrats instead of solid, sturdy, common-sense Americans."

Billy Brown paused, out of breath. He had probably made the longest, most serious, consecutive speech of his life. He could reel off jokes by the yard, and had no end of fish stories at command; but a serious speech, having to do with women who all glued their eyes on you so that you scarcely dared to raise your own—he mentally hoped, as he finished, would happen "never again."

"You think, then, my father would not have objected to my being associated with Ivo in a marital way, provided I carried out his wishes in respect to the business interests he has taught me to understand—in fact has bred me to manipulate?"

"Probably not. But you know how it is. When a woman is married, she is no longer her own boss. She is a minor. Poor woman! 'First a beast of burden, then a domestic ani-



mal, then a slave, then a servant, and then a minor.' Your father did not like the idea of your playing the part of minor after training you to boss big business interests and complications."

Billy Brown, feeling that he had acquitted himself bravely—had spoken to the point—now pulled out a big, fat cigar, lighted it, and began to puff vigorously. The Twins never liked the way Billy smoked in the house and all over it, but as Mr. White had often urged them to say nothing, "Bill being such an awfully good fellow, you know," they were mute.

Harriet broke the silence, which was becoming oppressive, by saying, "My conscience troubles me not a little about Ivo. I really did let him see in Rome that I loved him; and although I made no verbal promises that I would be his, by my actions I led him to believe that when my father no longer needed me, I would not longer turn a deaf ear to his pleading for my love. Well, now, do you know, I have a good mind to take Ivo on a free union basis, provided he is willing."

"My heavens! Why don't you say on a free love basis, and be done with it?" interposed Celia with flashing eyes.

"Ay, a free lust basis!" angrily shouted Delia. "This comes of Harriet's being educated by men. All men would like to have free lust in place of the holy state of matrimony, if they could get the women to agree to such a diabolical state of living."

"Not all men," corrected Harriet. "Why, it is our men who have made all our laws, those pertaining to marriage included."

"And made a mess of the business," said Jeremiah Jordan, still smarting over the way he had been stranded in life by clever divorce lawyers, stringent divorce laws, and a suspicious, credulous public.

Billy Brown removed his big cigar long enough to correct Harriet. He declared, "It is our priests, who refuse to marry at all, and who look down on marriage, who will have nothing to do with it themselves, that are responsible for our indissoluble marriage system. Once they get a man and woman yoked to-

gether, no matter how unequally, no matter if both find the yoke crushing the life prematurely out of them, just the same, they must put up with it, until, by George, the life too often is crushed out of 'em."

"Then I suppose you and Jeremiah will back up our Harriet in going to the devil, for that is where this free union—free love—free lust—it is all the same thing—leads to." Thus spoke Delia, her fleshy face red with anger.

Next, thin-faced, sad-eyed Celia began in a whining voice, to make her little speech.

"I am astonished, Harriet, that such a degrading idea should have entered your head—and to think of carrying it out with a European aristocrat! And of all things with an *Italian* aristocrat—a born sentimentalist, a born gambler with a childlike ignorance of the ten commandments, and particularly of the seventh! Love has really turned you into a fool, my poor child."

Celia whipped out a handkerchief and began to weep.

"Who is this Count Ivo Raffaello Bruno—

does he come of decent stock?" asked Billy Brown.

"It appears, from what I can learn, that his family tree contains many illustrious names, among which are two well-known saints, St. Ivo and St. Bruno."

"Has your Ivo the reputation of being a saint, too?" asked Celia, forgetting in her new interest regarding Harriet's lover, to weep.

"No, indeed! I would not be in love with him if he was a saint. Saints are unfit for practical life. They lack common sense."

Celia continued her weeping, while Delia said pleadingly, "Surely you are not in earnest—or you are so perplexed you do not know what you are talking about. Dear child, let us wait a few weeks, before considering this awful matter of free union further. We are all worn out with grief over your father's death."

"And, in the meantime, another person very dear to me may die," sighed, rather than said Harriet, becoming alarmingly pale.

"Go to see him, of course. While he is flat



on his back in a hospital, he cannot hurt anybody. I will drive you around, and then I must be off to business. It is time now I was on hand," Billy decided, after consulting his big watch. There was nothing small about "Bill Brown."

Harriet spoke firmly.

"No, I will not see Ivo again—unless I—we are willing he should become a member of our Family of Friends and a co-partner with me in a marital way."

"But you can't marry! Can't you get that into your head! And to live with him as you suggest—in a free union way—is a crime!" yelled Delia, almost in hysterics.

"I can't see it in that light," said Harriet firmly, and with more spirit than she had hitherto shown. "It seems to me, on the other hand, that it is a crime against human nature—and particularly American human nature, supposed to have infused into it more love of liberty than any other kind—to insist that every couple pledge away all domestic liberty when they get married—at an age, too, when

by far the greater number only imagine themselves in love. There is nothing I am more thankful to my father for than the prompt nipping in the bud of my girlish infatuation for a man I never could have really loved when once I saw him as he was—without character. Then after that to have felt myself obliged to bear his children—can't you understand what a condition of often intolerable purgatory this state of affairs would involve?"

"Oh, let Harriet have her way. She's got more sense than all of us put together," urged Billy Brown, as he got up to stretch himself and walk about a bit for a change, smoking meanwhile, and irritating the Twins more and more. Delia, therefore, spoke in her highest-pitched tones, and with an angry glance directed straight at Billy, though what she said was directed to Harriet.

"Do you suppose, for a moment, that any respectable woman would enter so intimate a relation as marriage entails, without an indissoluble marriage rite, upheld by both law and religion?"

“And counsel fees and alimony when the wife tires of her husband,” added Jeremiah Jordan, who, hitherto had not spoken. He was the regular type of “book-worm”—the thing he became after his wife ruined his career as a preacher of the Gospel. That is, he had developed into a bloodless, parchment-~~+~~skinned, bespectacled, bald-headed ~~+~~book-devouring machine, though sometimes for a change he prepared a learned volume which never failed to drop, still-born, from the press.

“Ah, yes,” resumed Harriet, “the way things are now, married men are certainly getting the worst of it. Think of my poor, innocent father! What immense pain, as well as big sums of money, his two supposedly indissoluble marriages cost him, and all because two women married him on account of the fact that he was rich, and probably for no other reason. I don’t wonder there is a great and growing tendency on the part of liberty-loving men to be bachelors rather than benedicts. The truth is, there ought to be two kinds of marriages—to fit those in bondage to the old

order, and for *bona fide* Americans. The former, who regard the institution as a sacrament, could then be wedded in a church, which seldom permits an annulment of marriage vows and re-marriage. The other, who hold common-sense views of matrimony, should be permitted to go to a civil servant and be married by him with the right to have their marriage contract dissolved in the usual way by another civil servant, the Judge presiding over the case, and to be at liberty to make a new marriage if desired. The truth is, marriages of 'anguish and alimony' are becoming scandalously frequent."

"But," urged Delia, "think of the hell you will find yourself in, should you go ahead and practice what you propose—a free union with this Italian aristocrat. It is notorious that a man tires of unlawful marital relations as he grows older and turns his face toward respectability. What will you do then, my poor Harriet?"

"Attend to my business, as usual," said Harriet with her usual serenity.



"Yes, but with a broken heart!" exclaimed Celia, removing her handkerchief and presenting to the view of all some very red eyes.

"Well, no—not for a man who tires of me. I have, I am sure, more common sense than to permit my heart to break for that sort of a man."

"Harriet has been trained by reasonable men, not by unreasonable, emotional women," remarked Jeremiah, regarding Harriet with admiration.

"Oh, you shut up. You are nobody!" witheringly ejaculated Delia, as she furiously stamped her foot.

*[ladylike!]*

Billy Brown now resumed his "throne-room chair," and said impressively:

"Ah, but my dear child, have you reflected that free union might entail disagreeable consequences. There might be children——"

"I hope there will be!" said Harriet impulsively. "Ivo is a tremendously well set up, handsome fellow. Who knows but that I might have by him children with forms like Greek gods and goddesses! I always said,

when I was a little girl, that I would have seven real children some day in place of seven make-believe ones. Think of my presenting the world with seven American-Greek gods and goddesses!"

"My God! Our Harriet to bring into the world illegitimate children! Illegitimate! Illegit——" Poor Delia could say nothing more from the fact that at this point she went off into violent hysterics, while her sister stopped her weeping to faint dead away.

Billy Brown rushed downstairs to telephone for a doctor and to send up sweet Lucy Myers with remedies calculated to assist Harriet and the tutor in their efforts to restore consciousness to Celia and abate the violence of Delia's attack of hysteria.

Then he hied himself down town to business, congratulating himself that he was out of that woman mess.

Bachelordom has its secret joys—and, perhaps, more than its share of secret sorrows.

## CHAPTER XII



*Your heart is never away,  
But ever with mine forever,  
Forever without endeavor,  
To-morrow, love, as to-day;  
Two blent hearts never astray,  
Two souls no power may sever,  
Together, O my love, forever!*

EXCHANGE.



## CHAPTER XII.

**H**ARRIET'S manager was very loyal to her, and so it happened that the lunch hour found him hurrying back to help her, if he could, under the present trying circumstances. He was pleased to see the Twins occupying their usual places at the dinner table, and more than pleased to observe that something like happiness shone once more in Harriet's countenance. Sweet Lucy Myers was busy passing good things to eat around among this silent and somewhat absent-minded group.

"Well, how are you coming on?" asked Billy Brown in his hearty way as he seated himself in the place always reserved for him.

Delia, looking unusually pale, replied, "Oh, we have told Harriet she would find us true-blue—no matter what she did! That if she chose to go to hell itself, we would go along watching for a chance to fan her."

This speech caused no end of merriment to Billy Brown, while Jeremiah's parchment skin relaxed about his mouth, and made him look suddenly quite human. As for Lucy, she smiled, but in a subdued manner, fearing that if she did otherwise she might hurt the feelings of her really good, high-minded-if-narrow aunts.

"I see you have the carriage at the door!" observed Billy when he had stopped laughing and blinking at Harriet.

"Yes, Uncle Jerry and I are going to the hospital where Ivo is, just as soon as he has finished his lunch."

"I am ready now," declared that gentleman with alacrity. He knew well enough that Harriet was immensely eager to be off. And so these two lost no time in setting off behind a pair of high-spirited, perfectly matched pair of "grays," Harriet driving, of course, it being too hazardous to let short-sighted, absent-minded Jeremiah attempt anything so perilous as irresponsible driving in crowded New York. But he was a good person to leave with a well-

hitched team; for always there came out of his pocket some abstruse work which made it easy for Harriet to go about her business in a leisurely way, if necessary.

The young Italian count had been taken to Bellevue Hospital, the first stone of the original building of which was laid in 1811. At this date, 1892-3, it embraced forty wards with 768 beds, thus constituting one of the largest institutions of the kind in the world. But Bellevue was only one of eighty of New York's "inns on the highway of life where suffering finds alleviation and sympathy," some of these inns—hospitals—being among the largest and most magnificent in the city. The newer ones are fitted up with the most efficient heating and ventilating apparatus. Indeed, it was affirmed "there is no kind of bodily suffering that may not find skillful treatment in these healing homes, where the most eminent physicians and surgeons give freely of their time and skill to the inmates." Truly, New York has a tender heart, since she already cares well for her

maimed, disabled and diseased children. Some day she will be just as solicitous for her hard-luck people—those out of work, who too frequently wearily tramp her streets, seeking employment, until they prematurely die of fatigue and hunger. True, New York's family grows by leaps and bounds; but then so does her store of good things multiply like the loaves and fishes we read about in our New Testament. Hence, without doubt, the New York of the future, reposing on her island home,—gracious, glorious, magnificent, like a city let down from Heaven,—will see to it that every member of her Family of Friends has enough and to spare.)

Harriet, having consulted the proper authorities, was soon following an attendant until she was brought to where her eye fell upon Ivo, his head well bandaged, his dark eyes heavy with a nameless melancholy, restlessly roving about as if seeking for something.

Harriet had kept well in the rear of her attendant until they were quite near his cot, when she stepped forward, bursting, as it were, sud-



denly on his vision—so near—without warning! A week of stony grief, minus food, except a little liquid nourishment, and almost without sleep, had strangely altered Harriet's countenance, usually so smiling, so serene—bespeaking vigorous health and fine mental poise. Ivo was horrified at the change one week had wrought, and his heart smote him. How could he have done this pale, lovely woman such fearful injustice! how believed her to be false and without heart! Tears filled his eyes as he held out his arms. Harriet was too weak, too worn, too conscience-stricken, too hungry likewise for a little love, to care what the witnesses about might think. She knelt down by Ivo's side, laid her head on Ivo's breast, and for a few moments wept with perfect abandonment. Then, recalling the fact that she should be self-controlled and cheerful in a hospital, of all places in the world, she quickly rose, saying as she wiped her face:

“Forgive me, Ivo, for being so weak when I should be strong, so bad when I should be good.”

They were quite alone, now, so far as the attendant was concerned, she having gone about her business as soon as she perceived that these two were lovers.

"Dear Harriet," eagerly began Ivo, "I am the one to ask pardon——"

"Say no more, Ivo mio. I was wholly to blame. I should have seen you and talked the matter over frankly. But let us now consider the best means to improve your health. You look sadly run down. When can you be removed to a private hospital, or some charming home where you can have more room to get well in, more air to breathe, more privacy."

"There is really nothing the matter with me—a mere scratch on my temple," said Ivo, as he held her hands tight within his own and devoured her with his eyes.

"If that is true," murmured Harriet rather doubtfully as she attentively regarded him, "I will go and search for some classic villa without too many modern improvements, where you can quietly and artistically recuperate."

Ivo laughed at Harriet's joking suggestions.

“As you please,” he replied, “only I must insist that it be not so far away but that you can come to see me often.”

“Oh, I am taking a vacation now and I shall make it my business to assist you to rugged health.”

“And when you have gotten me well, cara mia, with your tender care and loving glances, then will you leave me to languish miserably by cold neglect—or, perhaps, send me a cruel note that deprives me of reason—Oh, Harriet! surely you will not banish me again from your sweet presence, which means everything to me that life holds dear. With you I live! Without you—who can foresee what a hideous tragedy may take place with you and me in the leading rôles?”

As Ivo finished his threatening speech, he raised one of Harriet’s hands to his lips and bit it savagely; but Harriet only laughed, and replied in a soothing manner, “Ah, Ivo mio, let us be happy in the present, and fear nothing. Perfect love, you know, casteth out fear.”

Then she stooped down and permitted Ivo

to take the long, clinging lover's kiss he enjoyed so much—even in a hospital with plenty of witnesses! Being at length released, Harriet hurriedly retraced her steps, only pausing at the door to wave a cheerful adieu.



## CHAPTER XIII



*There is one element in human nature and the constitution of society more important than any other consideration, or considerations, to the future of marriage. That is the noble sentiment of love, too much ignored, ever dominant in the human race, ingrained in the very being of men and women, native to their growth. It will not be educated out of us. It shapes itself to our peculiarities. It is generous in the generous, refined in the refined, strong in the weak, but strongest in the strong. What improves the man improves the lover. So long as grass grows green and water runs down to the sea, will men and women share their joys and sorrows, cherish their offspring, and build in happy hope the fabric of their homes.*

JOHN L. SEATON in *North American*.

## CHAPTER XIII

I VO had been installed in a beautiful, spacious apartment, embracing a trio of rooms, in a "casa di saluti," a whole month before he dared touch again on so dangerous a topic as marriage. But at last he could wait no longer, and, being an Italian, he naturally prepared the way in an artistic manner.

After Harriet had bidden him farewell in Rome, he set himself to accomplish three things—by one of which, if successfully accomplished, he hoped to win the approbation of the father, John W. White; by the other two, command the admiration of his daughter and bind her heart to his own in a still closer union.

The first task was to so invest his fifty thousand dollars as to make it breed money with American swiftness. In this enterprise, luck—together with the shrewd advice of a Jewish

friend—favored him so that at the end of one year he had doubled his original fifty thousand dollars. But, alas, Mr. White had passed away quite unconscious of the titanic efforts put forth by Captain Bruno in the hope to make himself solid with the old man, thereby being able to win his consent as a suitor for Harriet's hand.

It now remained to see what effect upon Harriet his artistic efforts would produce. She visited him every afternoon, arriving at an early hour. Usually she came in one of her own private carriages, when they took a ride, visiting some historical or romantic scene, of which New York has an abundance. During a part of an afternoon spent in Central Park, Ivo made Harriet very happy by his enthusiastic praise of this noble park. True, he also made suggestions as to how it could and should be improved by so prodigiously wealthy a people as New Yorkers were famed to be—until she began to realize it was only in the first stages of its usefulness, picturesqueness and magnificence.



But this afternoon, when Harriet came, Ivo stoutly refused to go riding with her, giving the laughable excuse that he already knew more about little old New York, ambitious New York, and aspiring, metropolitan New York, than he knew about his own city—Rome. Then he added, “Besides, I have, I think, an agreeable surprise for you. Come right in! Follow me!”

As Harriet followed Ivo—not to the reception room, for some unknown reason—anxiety was gnawing at his heart in a way that seemed to him, at the time, to threaten early dissolution. Accordingly he was determined “not another day or hour” to obey Harriet’s oft-repeated advice “to be patient and get strong physically before attacking things not easy to handle.”

Ivo’s “surprise” for this afternoon consisted of three paintings which he had produced under the inspiration and at the dictation of that most formidable of autocrats, Love! Whether they were masterpieces or quite otherwise, he could not say, having given neither

“the world” nor any group of artists the opportunity to sit in judgment upon them. At present he cared only to please Harriet. If she liked them it mattered “not a continental” what others thought of their merits or demerits.

Not a word was spoken by Ivo, not a caress offered as the poor lover with sinking heart conducted Harriet toward a newly rented room, “with the light just right,” where he had carefully hung what might decide his fate—his three paintings. He was well aware that Harriet was a true lover of Art in its manifold manifestations. Indeed she had proved herself extremely susceptible to its influence over her mind and heart in many ways, and had sometimes expressed deep regret that her father had chosen to educate her for a business career instead of having her trained to follow some branch of Art. When asked which branch she would have chosen to devote her life to, she would laugh and say she could not tell off-hand, since she loved them all so well.

When Ivo opened the door of the room con-

taining his treasures, his face was quite pallid with fear. So much hung on the outcome of the next few moments! If Harriet thought them masterpieces, then she might be influenced to make some master move which would not only not separate them in the future, but tend toward completeness of union—to perfect unity of being.

Ivo *felt* what a certain writer has put into suggestible language: “By the mysterious law of sex polarity, each fills in and perfects the other in heart, knowledge and intuition, till, being wholly identified in one another, they prophesy. By their unity each knows more and better because of the other. The completeness of the unity perfects them.”

Having once got the door open with his shaking hands, Ivo said, “Look, Harriet! and then tell me what you think. Sit in judgment on the work of your poor lover, who will retire to the sofa, awaiting your verdict.” “Being meanwhile in hell,” Ivo said to himself, as he walked away.

Harriet, however, was paying no attention

to anything save the painting on which her eye first alighted. It held her spell-bound. It spoke to her with an eloquence which filled her eyes with tears, and pierced her heart with joy so intense it could scarcely be distinguished from pain. When she could gaze no longer because of the tears which came so fast in spite of her efforts to hold them back, she walked to where Ivo was seated, with her tear-stained face hidden in her hands. Next she knelt down by his side, laid her head on his lap, and actually sobbed, like an uncontrolled, emotional girl half her age.

The picture which had caused Harriet such intense emotion was entitled "Love's Healing Glance." True to life had Ivo drawn and painted Harriet as she looked, bending over him, while he lay ill in a hospital of Rome with a brain tortured by fever and full of mad fancies. He had, it is true, idealized Harriet's face somewhat, making it super-beautiful, with a lovely halo about the head. She was represented as gazing with love-filled glance steadfastly into the dark eyes of the sick man—an



excellent likeness of Ivo. Next, the artist had so rendered Harriet's steady gaze, that one could actually see, intermingled, delicate healing rays of love and light streaming from her beautiful eyes direct into that other pair, so full of pain and bewilderment—yet full, too, of eager hope. At one side, back of Harriet, stood the Lieutenant, resplendent in artistic Italian military trappings, eagerly watching the pair destined to be lovers. Still further back on the other side sat Mr. White, looking a trifle bored. The background and indeed every detail of this magnificent painting had been finished with the utmost care and skill. Some brilliant colors had been used, but all had been charmingly harmonized—not a false note anywhere. Ivo had not only approved himself a very skillful draughtsman, like Raphael, but a wonderful colorist, reminding one of Titian and his group. Then Harriet knew enough about portrait painting to be cognizant of the fact that it requires a very great artist to catch and place upon canvas such wonderfully true likenesses as Ivo had accomplished

with the four people represented in "Love's Healing Glance." "Why, Ivo must have toiled early and late for years to be able to so completely overstep the line which divides talent from genius," she said to herself. That the painting was a masterpiece Harriet recognized at a glance. Hence partly her intense feeling in the matter.

When Harriet had knelt to him, Ivo was instantly transported to the seventh heaven of bliss; but presently he said aloud quite calmly, though with evident, suppressed emotion:

"And you like the painting, Harriet, *really?*"

Harriet raised her tear-stained face to chide him a little ere she rose.

"Oh, Ivo! Why did you not tell me that you were already a great artist? Why leave me to find it out in this sudden way, and make a fool of myself, as father would say?"

Having thus spoken, Harriet with Ivo's assistance rose and began to smooth her hair, and to assume her usual serene, dignified manner. Ivo, observing that she was a little piqued,

caught up her hands and covered them with kisses. Then he asked:

"Why do you not deign to glance at the other two paintings? They are doubtless feeling piqued, too, at your neglect. At least *I* am beginning to feel hurt."

Ivo laughed joyously and thus belied his words.

"Are there others?" Harriet inquired, glancing attentively around the room. If she had observed other pictures she had taken it for granted that they belonged to the place. Now, noticing a couple more paintings as large and handsomely framed as the one she had been observing, she proceeded to examine the nearest one. Hardly had her eye rested upon it than she laughed merrily. The coloring was rich, even gorgeous; the scene lively ~~A~~ charming, while underneath one could read in Ivo's artistic scrawl, "Kiss and make up!" In this painting there were no spectators, only Ivo and Harriet evidently on the best of terms. On the wall, back of Ivo's couch, hung some tapestry gay with lively colors, depicting a

<sup>2</sup>, verdant love scene. Ivo was represented reclining in a nest of handsome pillows, each covered with rich material, painted and decorated in antique designs; also he himself was arrayed in a resplendent dressing gown, only a part of which was visible. Other artistic ornaments, pieces of sculpture, bits of painting, etc., to be seen on wall, stand or shelf,—gifts of his nurse Harriet to help him while away the time when she was unavoidably absent, and keep his mind, too, off himself,—were likewise there. In this painting Harriet was shorn of her nimbus and represented full of vitality and strong youth, and with an expression on her face of amusement, intermingled with slight annoyance, as if she had suddenly been hurt. She was glancing at plainly visible marks of teeth on her hand, the fingers of which were held tight by Ivo, who was regarding her with a laughably pathetic glance on his handsome face, just as if he were pleading, “Kiss And Make Up.” It was a delightful work of art, every detail of which was finished in as careful a manner as the first.



"You are a great genius, Ivo! That is very plain!" Having remarked thus, Harriet turned to give her attention to the third painting, wrought for her especial benefit, and to accomplish a certain purpose.

Ah, that last and third painting, how can it be described in words, tiny symbols, in black on white! for it depicted the parting scene of the lovers—Harriet and Ivo—just when Harriet was saying to herself, "How hard to give up this new and exquisite love that has created a new world for me, and made of me a new creature. But I must be true to my dear father who has been so true to me." She was not aware how she looked as these thoughts passed through her mind. She only felt how difficult it was to breathe for a time. But Ivo had caught the look of renunciation which had paled her face and at the same time caused it to shine, as she said with great tenderness to her lover—with outstretched arms and a look of despair on his face—"Ivo—*mio*—be as brave in love as in war."

Yes, it was all there! deep, unchangeable

love, united with renunciation on her part; and love as pure as deep, overshadowed by despair, on his. The painter had placed the most beautiful of halos about the head of Harriet, whose countenance he had made to shine with a love which partook more of that which is divine than of that which is human. His own face was handsome—as it could not help being if true to nature—but full of the black depths of despair.

As Harriet continued to gaze on this third and most wonderful painting, big tears began slowly to follow one another down her cheeks.

“Read what it says at the bottom!” called out Ivo, who had been a silent and blissful spectator.

“Please read aloud,” he added a moment later.

“Ivo—Mio—Be As True In Love As In War,” read Harriet falteringly.

“What does that mean?” asked her impatient lover. “Come sit down opposite me on this easy chair where I can have a full view of your sweet face.”

"Why, it means," said Harriet, unsuspectingly, "just what it says. Your record for bravery in war was of the highest description, I was told. Under the circumstances I wished you to make as good a record in respect to our love for one another, which I feared was futile, and therefore to be conquered."

"Che! che! che! Pay attention to the first part, not the latter. Explain, please, what you meant by associating two little words of three letters each, together, and emphasizing the second as you did. In short, what did you mean by saying, in that serious, yet charming way you have, when emotion stirs you deeply and the words come slowly, as if each were being weighed before it was uttered—'Yes, dearest!' Tell me what you meant when you said so slowly, so emphatically, 'Ivo, *mio* '?"

Ivo gave Harriet a look, as he finished speaking, which thrilled her innermost being. She blushed vividly, as she replied, rather deprecatingly:

"Ah, Ivo, you must not hold me responsible for the way that little word 'mio' es-

caped my lips. Truly, it emphasized itself. I was astonished at the way it betrayed me!”

“*Que fortuna!* It was your heart, speaking directly to mine—in deadly despair! Why, do you know, I must have perished—become distracted—but for the solace that little emphasized word—‘*mio—mine!*’—brought to me, like balm straight from Heaven? Yes, jioja mia! your heart that day put in its claim, and my heart responded in perfect loyalty; and from that time until I received your cruel note, I had the feeling that your heart was mine—as mine was yours. *In fede mia*—that moment when our hearts understood each other and beat as one, was a true marriage in the sight of Heaven!”

Ivo took Harriet’s hands firmly in his own, and looked straight into her beautiful eyes. She answered slowly, as she always did when deeply stirred:

“In the sight of Heaven—I think it was—but we are living on earth, where it is the custom in your country to have both a civil and a



church marriage. Here, only one is obligatory."

"Obligatory! did you say?" asked Ivo with burning eyes and hands that suddenly became cold as ice. "Why obligatory?"

"Oh, if you do not do as other people do, especially in respect to marriage, everybody—press, pulpit, society—and particularly the religious portion of the people, proceed to torture you with a subtilty and inventive cleverness truly diabolical. They rob you of your good name! of your means of support—when possible—and so surround you with poisonous thoughts and diabolical looks, that if you are susceptible you fall ill and prematurely give up the ghost, or, perhaps, commit suicide."

[Not a Madonna-like speech.]

"*Misericordia! Cielo!* Under the circumstances, how could your father force a dying promise from you that you would never marry? Knowing, too, that you were in love with me. Come, be frank with me! Or—Dio mio! We will together leave this world double-quick! *Intendete?*"

[Protestant style.]

A savage look came into Ivo's dark eyes that could shine so tenderly when love-filled.

"I understand you well," replied Harriet, as she soothingly pressed one of his hands to her lips. "Naturally I guessed his reasons, which have been since confirmed by our manager, Uncle Billy Brown. It seems they talked our love-affair over together, and reached the conclusion that it would not be wise for you and me to marry."

"Why?" demanded Ivo impatiently as Harriet paused.

"There were several reasons—the most important being the desire on my father's part that the daughter he had educated so carefully to fill his shoes should really do so. It is a business that cannot be mastered in a day, and many thousands are dependent on its being properly carried on."

"But I should not have interfered."

"Ah, but how was poor father to be made sure of that fact? As a rule, almost without exception, when an American heiress marries into the European aristocracy, she must give

up all that an American holds dear: country, religion, friends, family, and a good deal of hard-won womanly independence. Worst of all, she must see her children bred aristocrats. All must go backward in the scale of being instead of forward. Of course it would never have occurred to either father or me to ask you to make sacrifices for an American girl—who is a nobody in the eyes of haughty, aristocratic Europe.”

“Che! che! che! Had you but consulted me, you would have found your Ivo only too happy to exchange an Old World—full of soldiers, aristocrats, priests, mendicants, tedious conventionalities, insufferable banalities, undermined by warring anarchistic elements and overtopped by rulers trembling in their shoes and shorn of glory—for a New World! Ay, and for the Great Republic itself. Better still, exchanging an Old Rome, the best part of which is underground, for the New World Rome, with a magnificent, glorious future looming up before her—instead of rotting behind her. And right here let me prophesy

that the glory and the magnificence of the New World's Eternal City will be as different from that of the Old as a civilization reared by free-men, bearing within their bosoms the elixir of love, is vitally different from one that was honeycombed with slaves, poisoning their labor with hatred. But, listen! Best of all, I should have been eager to exchange any hopes I ever had of winning a conventional, aristocratic mate, for an enterprising woman of the New World—one who loves where her heart points the way, and proves that she does so by her lips of nectar. Ecco! give me some more proof!"

Harriet readily acquiesced, being of an ardent nature with but little Puritan blood in her veins. Indeed, if her father's brain had descended to her, Harriet's body was replete with the blood that had made a tragedy of her Italian mother's life.

"It is too late to consider what might have been," she said thoughtfully. "The point is, *dare* we undertake to live together in Free Union—or, as the dear public would say, 'Infamous Union'?"



"Why do you ask? Did you not assure me, a while back, that 'perfect love casteth out fear'?" quoted Ivo triumphantly.

"That is very true; but a famous woman of world-wide experience declares that it is man's nature to turn his face to respectability as he grows older, just as surely as a tired horse turns toward his stable. She *insists* that a person who will risk living with a man on a basis of love merely is a very foolish person; that if a man cannot marry a woman, he eventually leaves her."

"Then you don't trust me," said Ivo quickly, his eyes filling with tears.

For reply, Harriet wound her arms about his neck, and laid her soft lips on his.

Presently Ivo asked in much anxiety, "But how shall we be able to consider ourselves *one in fact*, without any marriage ceremony and without any fuss?"

Harriet smiled upon Ivo so serenely that he felt a little as if making much ado about nothing. Then she replied, quite seriously, "You know, my dear Ivo, that I have been bred a

business woman. That means that I have been taught to accomplish things in the shortest, simplest, straightest manner possible. We will have a simple home celebration of our Free Union. Have you any friends that you care to invite to this little celebration?"

"Under the circumstances, I think not. They would not understand."

"Well, then, there will be present only the members of our Family of Friends. They will understand, because I have beat it into them, and already the fainting and hysterical spells on the part of the Twins are a thing of the past."

Before Ivo asked the next question he dropped gracefully on his knees by the side of Harriet, took both her hands, placing them together in the form of prayer, as if silently invoking their aid, then asked in a pleading voice:

"Madonna mia! I pray you have mercy on your patient lover, and let this celebration take place in a few days, or a week hence, at the farthest."

"It shall be a week hence," said Harriet as she stooped over and kissed, in a dainty manner, Ivo's handsome, Raphael brow. Then she said in her rapid, business tones, after consulting her watch:

"Ah, me! I must be going." Both rose together, and as Harriet walked toward the wonderful paintings for a parting glance, she sighed deeply, and murmured:

"How can I leave these beautiful, beautiful paintings!" She began to admire them anew. Presently she said, as she turned to Ivo with tear-filled eyes:

"Surely, Ivo mio, you will devote your God-given genius to art?"

"To art and to the American Madonna who loves me, as I never dreamed I could be loved by womankind, and who has been my inspiration," the young artist replied, with a look of adoration.





## CHAPTER XIV





*Raphael's "Marriage of the Virgin"*





## CHAPTER XIV

I VO had just finished his elegant Free Union toilette in his apartment and was turning away from his mirror, wondering what made "that beast of a driver" so late, when he heard a knock at the door. He was so glad to perceive the delinquent had arrived, that he forgot to "give him the devil," as he intended doing a few moments previous. On the contrary he smiled, thus causing the smiled upon to say to himself:

"Gosh! I should say this 'ere fellow was in a pictur' did I not see him with these eyes in the flesh."

In no long time Ivo and his attendant and baggage had arrived at Harriet's fine old mansion. Here the door was opened by the mistress herself, arrayed in a beautiful lace-trimmed ivory satin gown. She did not wish Ivo to be made nervous by having to face

strangers before they took their places under "Liberty Tree"—hence her playing the part of doorkeeper on this eventful evening.

Harriet ordered "John" to take Ivo's luggage upstairs, after which her lover got his coveted kiss. They then, also, more leisurely followed the attendant to the second story of her home. After this individual had finished playing his little part and gone his way delighted with the extra tip Ivo gave him, and the lovers had been lavish with praise in respect to the appearance each presented on this fateful evening, Harriet said laughingly:

"And now, my dear Ivo, be as brave in our Free Union Celebration, as in war!"

"Altro! Come down to details. What am I to do in that room down stairs where your confederates are bunched together ready to glare upon that 'brainless fop,' that 'sneaking fortune-hunter,' that 'incorrigible gambler,' that 'Italian sentimentalist with a childlike ignorance of the seventh commandment,' that——"

Here Ivo had to stop short from the fact

that Harriet's strong, yet soft hand was placed inconveniently across his mouth. She held it there fully a second, laughing merrily as she did so. When she removed her palm Ivo was in a better mood, though he said, rather petulantly:

"Dio mio! You have got me in a hole. Now you must help me out."

Harriet, perceiving that Ivo was really rattled, said, very sympathetically:

"Why, Ivo, I thought you knew how Americans proceed when they do things in a truly American spirit. First they decorate a hall, or big room, with flags, bunting and American heroes—some of them: usually George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln. Well, I have had our big double drawing-rooms down stairs handsomely draped with several fine specimens of our gay flag and plenty of bunting. Next, there were a number of paintings removed to give place for splendid engravings of Paine, Washington, Jefferson, Franklin, Jackson, Emerson. Also of Garibaldi and Mazzini, and, as if that were

*[coarse]*

not enough, I had set up in the big front bay window a Thomas Paine sort of Liberty Tree. We are to take our places under this tree, all loaded with gifts—which have been pouring in for several days. Of course Uncle Billy—who could never keep anything quiet—has been babbling right and left. But that is all right! Our Free Union Celebration was bound to become public property—and, the sooner the better, I am sure.”

“Ah, but Harriet, it is doubtless easy enough for a speech-bred American to concoct on his feet a neat, spread-eagle talk. But I was bred a soldier. My business was to fight. How can *I* make a speech?”

“Why, there was Napoleon, bred a soldier likewise, also an Italian by birth, who could fight and talk with equal brevity and forcefulness; a conqueror with words no less than with arms. You need only say a few words.”

“Altro! Suppose on this occasion my tongue is tied so tight in my mouth I can’t speak at all. What then, cara mia?”

At this point Ivo dropped on a sofa near by,



and lay back looking for all the world as if in a dead faint. Harriet, suspecting it was but a bit of clever Italian acting, got a fan and wielded it so vigorously as to tumble his wonderful bronze-gold locks in every direction, making his head appear as if a cyclone had struck it. Ivo opened his eyes without loss of time, and grabbed the hand which was doing such damage to his carefully arranged, ambrosial locks. This he held so tight for an instant that Harriet perforce gave a little shriek. After making good by releasing her hand with a kiss, he said laughingly:

“It is my belief that American women are growing too clever. Religion and Law must get busy again. What a pity I cannot marry you in the good, old-fashioned way!”

After speaking these words, and accompanying them with a look amusingly pathetic, Ivo turned to a glass and carefully rearranged his rather long locks in an artistic manner. Harriet meanwhile observed, “I have always understood that there are two situations wherein men are invariably cowards.”

"What are they?" queried Ivo, glancing from the glass to Harriet.

"One is that which you find yourself facing to-night. The other is where a man becomes panic-stricken *not* when he mounts his charger for battle, but a dental chair!"

"Altro!" said Ivo, turning a pallid face to Harriet, and afterwards re-seating himself by her side. "I could have all my teeth pulled and not suffer as I am doing now."

"Ah, what a pity that would be! You have such perfect ones. I suppose Italians have the finest teeth in the world and Americans the poorest. Therefore what would be a tragic situation for an American, an Italian could not even understand."

"And not understanding cannot appreciate, eh? But—*Dio Mio!* help me out of my misery! That big room, or rooms, down stairs has got to be charged, its inmates conquered, put to the sword, or to rout, or made prisoners of, or done something with—I don't know what. In the name of sweet peace—or, of liberty, if you prefer—teach me how to play my little

part down below. If now we were going through the form usual on such occasions as this, I could have got the thing down fine; have made the responses in a dignified manner; have kissed women relatives with grace and listened becomingly to a thousand more or less congratulations—even concocted suitable replies. But here is a new situation, so appallingly——”

“Simple!” interjected Harriet.

“Che! che! che! let me finish properly. So appallingly *new* and therefore difficult.”

“Not at all, Ivo, caro. All we need do is to walk through the hall door—which I will open—and then a short distance to where the Liberty Tree looms up in the front bay window. Underneath its ample branches we take our stand. If, when there, you find yourself too embarrassed to say anything—why you know a woman’s tongue is hung in the middle. Come along now, we must not stand shivering on the bank any longer.”

As Harriet finished speaking she took one of her lover’s hands firmly in her own, and to-

gether they walked down the stairs and soon were standing under the "Liberty Tree," a couple of rare beauty, Ivo's pallor making him look more like a Greek god than ever, while Harriet, in her queenly robe, trimmed with old, Italian lace—a present from Ivo, as were likewise the antique jewels she wore, looked every inch a queen.

Feeling Ivo's hand become deadly cold in hers, Harriet turned about and looked him bravely in the face. As she did so she slowly repeated in her firm, even tones:

"Ivo, *mio*, let us ever love each other so truly that,

'Our work shall be the better, for our love,  
And still our love be sweeter, for our work.'"

By this time Ivo was rapidly recovering from his attack of stage fright. He found his lips sufficiently pliable to begin his little speech, though he spoke at first very haltingly.

"Dear—Family—of Friends. You are aware that, under the circumstances, Harriet and myself cannot make what is termed a



legal marriage. We believe, however, that the Great Spirit of Love has joined our hearts in an unbreakable union—and that whom God hath joined man *cannot* put asunder. Feeling thus we begin our united life full of sacred joy as well as of love and trust. On the threshold of our new and more complete existence we pause, hoping to receive your cordial congratulations and hearty God-speed.”

“Bravo! bravo!” repeated Harriet, as Ivo finished, at the same time flinging her arms about his neck and giving him several exuberant kisses. Ivo blushed like a school-boy, and came near forgetting to place a very beautiful ring, set with the birthstones of himself and Harriet, on her finger. When, at length, this was accomplished, the happy couple found themselves surrounded by a smiling group to whom Harriet introduced Ivo as “Captain Bruno, of whom you have heard me speak. He is embodied Art, Romance and Love—an acquisition.” Then she said, laughingly, “Ivo, you kiss the women, and I will kiss the men.”

Her lover, nothing loath, approached the

*I liked*

Twins, and as he did so, Harriet admonished him:

“Kiss them good! I doubt if they have ever been kissed decently in all their lives. American men don’t know how to kiss.”

The Twins blushed deeply as Ivo approached them. Under the circumstances Captain Bruno felt obliged to make a little speech in order to pave the way for the kisses; and as he had gotten confidence by the one just made, he said, impulsively and charmingly:

“Now I am going to treat you just as I do my Aunt Helena, one of the best women in the world.” Thus speaking, he threw his arms about the necks of each one in turn and gave each frightened woman of Puritan descent two warm Italian kisses apiece; one on each side of their mouths. Then he completed the conquest of their hearts by telling them that he did not intend to rob them of any of their portion of Harriet’s affection—that he was quite satisfied with the new place he himself had won by pluck and perseverance. Needless to assert that from this time on—until he

went to Rome seven years later—Ivo had not two firmer friends than the Twins.

Ivo was surprised to find in the wake of the Twins, a charming brunette whom Harriet had not mentioned as being present, and whom he had not observed until this moment. She was young and beautiful and blushing modestly as Ivo's dark eyes fell upon her. "What to do now?" It was one thing to kiss elderly ladies, members of one's family, and quite another to offer so intimate a caress to a beautiful young woman of whom one knows nothing. Of course, the fact that she was present on this occasion and evidently on terms of intimacy with Harriet's Family of Friends, spoke volumes. Nevertheless Ivo was nonplussed at this new situation so suddenly sprung on him. He said, rather awkwardly—for him who was usually so gallant and graceful in society:

"Did Harriet know you were here when she told me to kiss the women?"

"I don't think so. I slipped in late."

"Well, I don't think I'll dare to kiss you then—only this lovely, artistic palm." Thus

speaking he caught up one of sweet Lucy Myers' pretty hands and deposited a kiss upon it in true knightly style. Then Ivo turned to greet the two men, Uncle Jerry and Uncle Billy, whom Harriet had been having a lot of fun with, because when she came to kiss her manager, he had insisted on having just as many kisses as had fallen to Ivo's share when through with his Free Union Celebration speech. Next Uncle Jerry, always a little jealous of "Bill," declared that he too must be generously dealt with on this wonderful occasion.

But, at length, all the kisses and caresses and hearty congratulations had been given, as well as the dinner—served immediately afterwards—done full justice to. Then Harriet rose, saying to Ivo seated by her side, but loud enough for all to hear:

"We must hasten upstairs and get into something stout and durable. By that time the carriage will be at the door to take us to the depot. Don't let us disturb the rest of you, unless it be Lucy, whom I should really



like to have assist me out of my rather complicated satin robe."

Lucy rose with alacrity, also Billy Brown, the latter offering to perform the same office for Ivo that Lucy was to undertake for Harriet. But Ivo declared he needed no assistance, having been bred a military man, and taught to wait on himself while very young.

The three proceeded upstairs to the apartments formerly occupied by Harriet's father and herself. The large, comfortable front room with its great bay window had been her father's favorite room. The pieces of furniture he used most had been, since his death, removed to a room on the upper floor which Harriet called her "Holy of Holies." Here she came every day for a space of time, longer or shorter as could be spared, to read in the books they both had loved, and ere she locked the door to return whence she came, she knelt in prayer, pleading that she might be just as true to work and duty now as when her father's watchful glance was upon her.

On the same floor, where the light was just

right, a couple of rooms had been metamorphosed by skillful hands into a charming, well-appointed studio for Ivo. Metamorphosis likewise had overtaken the great, fine front room on the second floor. To see it, as the trio of people now entering saw it, one would never have guessed how comfortable, how *American* it had looked only a short while ago. Now it reminded one of Italy during her greatest period, that of the Renaissance—for Harriet had transferred to this finely proportioned, elegant room many of the finest things of that period, which she and her father had been able to secure during various vacations spent in European art centers. As Ivo examined with Harriet and Lucy one after another of the exquisite and rare *objets d'art*, and was astonished at the taste displayed as to their arrangement, he more than once pressed Harriet's hand, not daring to offer a more ardent tribute of praise and appreciation with a third party present.

When Harriet flung open the massive double doors leading to the next room, Ivo's eye fast-

ened on various locks which, when in use, must offer a stout resistance to anyone desirous of passing from the front parlor to its companion room.

"These must all be removed," said Ivo with emphasis. "No locks between you and me," he added recklessly.

Harriet smiled her wise, inscrutable smile, but said nothing.

Ivo's next remark, as he glanced into Harriet's private parlor, was, "Chielo! What a thief you must be, Harriet! Evidently you have robbed Mt. Olympus of every one of its gods and goddesses!"

"Besides robbing Rome of her most perfect one in flesh!" added Harriet, laughing. Then she said, after consulting her watch, "Do you know, Ivo, we must banish you to your own quarters, and make a lightning change of raiment? It is high time we were ready for our little trip."

When Ivo had meekly obeyed and was safe over his threshold, Harriet proceeded to thrice lock the door, remarking to Lucy as she did so:

"'Tis better to begin with your sweetheart as you mean to hold out. Teach him that a woman has some personal rights as well as a man. He will respect you the more, and love you the better."

Lucy smiled, but wondered how Harriet could ever dream of turning a key on so adorable a lover as charming Captain Bruno; or, as he was called among his aristocratic associates, "Conte Bruno." Sweet, innocent Lucy! Never as yet had she come into contact with the artistic temperament! Ah, never as yet had she dreamed to what heights and depths of folly such a temperament can rise or descend to when played on by passion!

After Harriet and Ivo had departed on their vacation trip, and sweet Lucy Myers had gone to bed, the White Family of Friends undertook to talk over the present situation which the Twins still regarded as a very demoralizing one, notwithstanding the good impression Ivo had produced on them. Said Billy Brown:

"Captain Bruno is in love with our Harriet all right, and must suit her right down to the



ground, for he has the form of a Greek god, which she so admires." Having thus spoken Billy indulged in one of his chuckling laughs.

"And the face of a Raphael," added Celia. "But don't you think, Mr. Brown, that it is very hazardous for our sweet Harriet to live with a man in so loose a bond? Why, he can walk off any day he likes! There is nothing to hinder him! No Law, no Religion—nothing. Harriet has no string on him, whatever!"

Delia burst in before Billy Brown could remove his fat cigar to reply:

"Why, that great lecturer who knows so much about European men and Englishmen, declares that the former don't pretend to care for their wives because the dowry system kills love, while the latter, though he marries for love, is quite tired of his wife in five years. Then he adds that men are natural born polygamists, which is the real reason why the priests—who are men, in a way—have given Christendom an indissoluble marriage system. By its aid a woman having once got a man to the marriage altar, can keep her place as his

wife as long as she lives, and make him support their children. It is a well-known fact that the majority of men remain 'true to their wives,' as we say, simply because they are bound to them by religion, custom and public opinion. In short, they dare not be otherwise than good husbands. Now, suppose this handsome Captain, this aristocratic sprig of the Roman aristocracy, gets tired of our Harriet and runs away——"

"Let him run!" laconically put in big Billy.

"Ah, but stop and think a moment. Our poor dear Harriet might have a child by him. How awful would be her fate! To be deserted, with a fatherless child on her hands!"

Celia began to wipe her eyes, which fact filled Jerry and Billy with apprehension. Nevertheless, the latter answered stoutly:

"Well, what of that? Undoubtedly the child would be a child worth having, being love begot, because it is easy to see that these two adore each other now. Children born under such conditions represent the union of their

parents at their best, and are apt to be lovely in countenance, fine in character and full of vitality. Our Harriet is no fool. She will put in her claim for a child—and she is a born madonna—while Ivo is in his most adoring and adorable mood.”

“Oh,” said Celia, in a voice that broke as she proceeded, “but the suffering of our poor dear Harriet when this love turns cold!”

Again she buried her face in her handkerchief and silently wept. Jeremiah, fearing that he and “Bill” might presently have the Twins repeating their fainting and hysterical spells on their hands with no Harriet to help them out, here spoke up, in his jerky way:

“But—married life has its suffering, too—as I happen to know.”

“Oh, well! but it is a different kind of suffering. You get, if respectably married, respect and sympathy,” triumphantly asserted Delia.

“And alimony from the one kicked out of sight,” added Jeremiah bitterly.

This speech acted like a red rag displayed in

the face of a bull on Delia, who screamed rather than said:

"Keep still! You're nobody!"

Under the circumstances, with no Mr. White or Harriet to keep the peace, Jeremiah would have done well to have done as Delia ordered him to do. But he could not forbear saying:

"I *was* somebody—till I got married." This proved too much for the sisters, already worn to the limit of endurance. They started immediately and obstreperously from their seats, and swiftly approached the now cowering Jeremiah. They stopped only when they had reached his feet, which he immediately drew under his chair, there being more than one corn on them. And it was well that he did so, for Delia stamped her foot in a reckless way, and also shook her long forefinger menacingly, while she poured out vials of wrath on Jeremiah's bald pate.

"It is *you* who are to blame for the awful mess we find ourselves in. Yes, it is *you*, and *you* alone who are responsible for the fact that



Harriet knows nothing that she should know, and everything that she shouldn't know. My, you have been teaching her a dozen years or more, and what is the result?"

Delia paused for breath while Celia answered: "The result is that our poor, dear Harriet is a rebel against all law, all religion and social order. She is an outcast, and Heaven's thunderbolts will fall and destroy her sooner or later. Oh, you wretched man! I could tear you limb from limb; I could cut you up in small pieces; I could apply hot pinchers to your flesh. I could——"

At this point Billy Brown felt himself called upon to interfere in behalf of Jeremiah.

"Come," he said, in his stentorian voice, which he used with good effect when aroused, "quit your squabbling. What's done can't be undone. If Harriet has learned to know and manage many men with rare skill in a business relation, rest assured that she will know how to manage one in a domestic way. It is because men and women know so little about each other's natures when they marry, that terrible

misunderstandings often follow marriage. Come, Jeremiah, let's off to bed."

Jeremiah followed big Billy Brown out the front drawing-room with alacrity. The Twins had given him enough excitement and dramatic change for one night.

Probably Jeremiah Jordan never was conscious of the debt he owed these two mature New England women, having great learning of a certain conventional kind, with energetic natures, triumphantly clean, inspiringly good cooks, and with tongues that kept him from stagnating. Indeed, his wits had been sharpened not a little in the word battles which took place now and then over the dining-table, between himself and them, with Mr. White egging him on and occasionally when "poor Jerry" was getting the worst of it, coming to his assistance. On these occasions Harriet was overlooked, regarded as a negligible factor, because, as a rule, she merely listened. But, ah, she was a good listener! and, who knows what conclusions she drew concerning great, per-

haps never-to-be-settled vital questions, such as Marriage, Divorce—Is Christianity a Practical Religion? and if not, Will It Be Superseded by Science?—What is Socialism?—Is it a Foreign Importation Like Christianity?





## CHAPTER XV



*But he (Boyesen) was proud of his American citizenship; he knew all that it meant, at its best, for humanity. He divined that the true expression of America was not civic, not social, but domestic almost, and that the people in the simplest homes, or those who remained in the tradition of a simple home life, were the true Americans as yet, whatever the future Americans might be.*

*W. D. HOWELLS in Literary Friends and Acquaintances.*

## CHAPTER XV

I VO and Harriet sped a few miles on an express train, then were rapidly driven to a dainty suburban hotel, where they registered as “Mr. and Mrs. Bruno.”

“I suppose this good proprietor would politely assure us, ‘There are no vacant rooms at present,’ if he knew the law had not been invoked to bind us in an indissoluble marriage for better or worse so long as we live.”

This remark Harriet made to her sweetheart, *sotto voce*, so as not to be overheard by the clerk, who was preceding them to their rooms.

“Dio mio! this Free Union business is bound to yield a puzzling amount of dramatic situations; but I fear nothing with you, Harriet—for you do not seem to know what fear is. Besides, you have a wonderful way of being equal to each new situation as it shows up.” Ivo

raised the hand he held to his lips and kissed it ardently.

“Thanks, my Ivo. It is delightful to enter upon our new life with an abundance of faith. We shall doubtless need every particle of it, because, in spite of the fact that my mother was Italian, I have been bred from childhood up, to eliminate romance and keep my eyes glued on the business side of life. This means much annoyance for you and the development of patience.”

By this time the clerk had unlocked the door of their pretty suite of rooms, and when he had lit the gas and seen that all was in order, quietly took his departure. Scarcely had the door closed than Harriet's sweetheart grabbed her and gave her an embrace which only a robust woman could have endured without emitting a tell-tale shriek. Then he said as he devoured her with his thrilling glance—and afterwards with his perfect lips—“At last you are mine, mine, *mine!* Now I know that God's other name is Rapture! And that we are his children!”



But, alas, while Ivo and Harriet are enjoying their new-born Paradise, another couple, not a stone's throw away, are sleepless with perplexity and anguish. They are in receipt of "dear Harriet's letter" apprising them of her intention of forming a Free Union with her Ivo, since her promise to her dying father makes a *bona fide* marriage impossible. The letter went on to state how much she wanted to show them her sweetheart—as handsome a man as grew above ground! But, having done so, and knowing how truly sincere they were in respect to the need and wisdom of the indissoluble form of marriage, and realizing the pain they must feel to see one who had long been dear to them living in what they must consider an unholy manner, they would not remain over night.

How this dear old orthodox couple did wrestle in prayer on the receipt of this astounding letter! They had long been tenants of Harriet's father. Indeed, for a quarter of a century they had made a living and a competence for old age by taking care of—and raising

produce on—the picturesque birthplace of Mr. White. They had watched the “little one,” which his runaway wife had given him, grow from a toddling child into a sweet maiden, then to evolve, under his skillful training, into a charming, extremely clever business woman. They had more than once listened to Harriet’s father, as he proceeded to make plain to them the fact—for so he considered it—that women did not know how to raise children; that they made a mess of the only legitimate business Heaven had entrusted them with—that is, the bringing into the world and the training of children. He declared mothers spoiled their children at the very start, and kept on spoiling them so long as they had any influence over them. For proof that a man could train up a child in the way it should go, when he made a business of it, with no woman to interfere, he would point triumphantly to his Harriet.

Now, this good couple, after a long period of wrestling with the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, finally rose from their knees and reseated themselves in their easy chairs.

"Someway," admitted the old farmer, Joshua Edwards, as he scratched his bushy gray hair in a puzzled way, "I don't seem to have got much light as to whether we ought to let 'em stay over night or not."

Martha said nothing, while she adjusted her spectacles and took up some darning. After getting under headway with a big hole in one of Joshua's socks, she remarked laconically:

"Nor I, Joshua!" Presently she spoke again to inquire if there was no verse or commandment in the Word of God to tell them what to do so they might be sure what was right and what was wrong at so crucial a time as now. She finished her anxious queries by remarking, "Surely, Joshua, you kin remember some verse or commandment to help us out of our fix?"

Joshua, thus appealed to, again scratched his head, fidgeted in his chair and sighed deeply. Finally he said, "There's that 'ere commandment on adultery."

"What is adultery? I've allers wanted to know, but never got the time to find out. When

I was a girl and asked my Sunday-school teacher, she said it wasn't nice for a girl to know. Of course I knew it was something awful bad."

Martha looked up from her darning and fixed her watery blue eyes scrutinizingly upon her husband. He did not want to tell her, but seeing no way of escape, he said, frowningly:

"Adultery, come to think of it, don't fit this case at all. That has to do with married people, those who are not true to each other."

"But can't you think of some verse that does? You've had more time to read in the Word of God than I have. F'r instance, sometimes in the winter on a rainy day, you do get a little time to read Scripture. As for a farmer's wife, her work goes on just the same, rain or shine, Sunday or week-day—it's never done!"

"I'll tell you what, I'll just open the Bible careless like and, I doubt not, my eye will light on the right bit of Scripture to help us out. I've tried it a number of times, and never knew it to fail."



"That's a bright idea!" ejaculated Martha, without, however, pausing in her work.

Joshua proceeded to the parlor, where, on the center-table reposed a big family Bible, rarely opened by the busy couple. On Sundays, it is true, he tried to satisfy his uneasy, Puritan-bred conscience by taking the book in his lap and reading some passage in Holy Writ, wherever the book happened to open. But being used to a very active, out-of-door life, he was soon fast asleep.

Having secured the Bible and laid it on his knees, he proceeded cautiously to open it. Next he proceeded conscientiously to read aloud the verse his eye lighted upon:

"And the Lord caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept; and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh thereof."

"I don't see anything in that verse to help us out, do you?" queried Joshua, his face more deeply wrinkled with anxiety than ever.

"Read right on until you do strike something to give us the needed light. There's nothin' like perseverance. If at first you don't

succeed, try, try again. Them's my principles." Joshua dutifully did as he was bidden—not knowing what else to do:

"And the rib which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman and brought her unto the man.

"And Adam said, This is now bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.

"Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."

"That'll do, Joshua. Those verses are right to the point. It's plain to me that when God Almighty marries a couple, we can afford to let 'em stay with us over night."

"But how are we to know whether God has made this Captain and Harriet of one flesh or not?"

"Now, Joshua, you know as well as I do that if anyone, nowadays, 'walks with God,' it's as likely to be Harriet as any priest or minister we've heard tell of. If she has taken this 'ere Captain Bruno—or Count Bruno, as some

call him—to be flesh of her flesh, she must first have been mighty sure it was God's will. At any rate I'd place more confidence in her word than in anybody else's, present company excepted!" loyally concluded Martha. To be compared with Harriet in the matter of making his word good—and to have his word as good as his bond—was Joshua's special pride, and removed the last bit of flickering doubt in respect to permitting Harriet and her sweetheart to remain over night. He exclaimed triumphantly:

"Gosh, let 'em come! Let 'em come! Let 'em stay as long as they please! I wanted 'em to come all the time, but I knew you well enough, Martha, not to dare to ax 'em if you weren't willin'. Women can make things mighty uncomfortable for their own sex when they once set out."

"That's because men are inclined to be too easy in respect to the sins they have a weakness for. But what do you suppose ever made John White get his daughter to promise him not to marry? It's the strangest thing in the

world! He might have foreseen just what has happened."

"Doubtless he did, for John W. White was a far-sighted man. That's why he died so rich."

"What! you don't mean to tell me that Harriet's father would not turn in his grave if he could have foreseen the effects of that dyin' promise?"

Here the startled Martha, feeling sure that Joshua was keeping something back, dropped both work and scissors on the rug, thus necessitating a stooping over to secure them, which she did not like after a hard day's toil.

"B'gosh! I s'pose I might as well tell you, first as last, for when a woman guesses a man knows somethin', she never rests till she gets on to it."

"Out with it! It takes you so long, sometimes, to limber up that tongue of yourn. Now a woman's tongue never catches the rheumatism."

"I wish it did," responded Joshua ungalantly. "Think what a rest a man would have,



married to a woman with a tongue laid up occasionally, or which she could only painfully set going. She might learn then to think before she speaks."

"Poor creature! how the men would shun her! But do tell me why John W. White exacted a dyin' promise from his daughter never to marry. Why, I supposed that is what the women were made for—to marry and bear children. I *know* that's Scriptur', for I've heard more sermons preached on the text that says so, than on any other in the whole big Bible. For Heaven's sake, hurry up—spit it out! What are you afraid of?"

Martha stopped her darning to critically examine the one man she looked upon as her very own—mind, body, and soul. Nothing vexed her more than to feel that he was trying to keep her locked out of some little cubby-hole of his complex being.

Joshua squirmed about in his great easy chair, not particularly easy just now with the sharp eyes of Martha riveted upon him. He finally said, with the greatest reluctance:

"The reason I've kept quiet was because I was afraid if I told you, you would think the less of John, who can't speak up for himself. Of course I didn't get the whys and wherefors of this dyin' promise business from John himself, but from big Bill, who blabs everythin'."

"Well?"

"Wal, it seems Bill and John had some long talks over Harriet's bein' dead in love with this furrin count, and what was likely to happen when her father no longer needed her personal care."

"What do you mean? Explain yourself!"

"Why, you know well enough how the daughters of our big millionaires are crazy to marry Old World aristocrats and breed new ones, which have mostly to be supported with American money. God only knows what multitudes of our people are over-worked and their children prematurely made bread-winners, in order to bolster up and renew this aristocratic business in Europe. The thought that Harriet might do the same thing on account of the great love she bore this Italian aristocrat made Mr. White and Bill put their heads together to

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make sure that not only would the White millions remain in America, but that Harriet herself would be obliged to remain here, too.”

“So they took advantage of Harriet’s other great love—that for her father—to carry out their purposes. Poor Harriet! Is that all Bill Brown told you? I don’t know why I should think the worse of poor John for doing what he did. It is notorious that the European aristocracy have small respect for American girls, and look upon their marriages with ’em as the exchange of a title for American dollars. But you are holding somethin’ back. I see it in your guilty face. Now tell me all.”

“Wal, when Bill said to John, ‘Supposin’ Harriet, who has been brought up by men, that is, taught by ’em mostly, and never been in society, should make up her mind that a real union of hearts, cemented by true love, was, after all, a very real marriage in the sight of Heaven, and should act on that belief,—her promise to you preventing her getting married the usual way—and of this union some children should result—what then?’

“Bill said after he had put it in this startling

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way, Mr. White, who was determined on the dying promise, said nothing for a full five minutes. Then Bill declares he said solemnly, as if standin' afore the Great Judge:

“ ‘ Bill, it's not an altogether satisfactory picture to see my Harriet bringing into the world a brood of illegitimate American children. But—my God! I had rather see her do that than discover—should Heaven occasionally permit me to return to look upon her sweet madonna face—that she was in Europe helping to breed a new generation of wanton, idle aristocrats.’ There! you've got the last shred of information that Bill poured into my ear about this dyin' promise business. And now let's go to bed. It's very late. I'm glad we've settled it that they are to stay all night to-morrow night.”



## CHAPTER XVI



*It would seem that women are more largely swayed by destiny than ourselves. They submit to its decrees with far more simplicity; nor is there sincerity in the resistance they offer. They are still nearest to God, and yield themselves with less reserve to the pure workings of the mystery.*

*And therefore it is, doubtlessly, that all the incidents of our life in which they take part seem to bring us nearer to what might almost be the very fountain-head of industry.*

*It is, above all, when a clear presentment flashes across us—a presentment flashes of a life that does not always seem parallel with the life we know. They lead us close to the gate of our being.*

*May it not be during those profound moments, when his head is pillowed on a woman's breast, that he learns to know the strength and steadfastness of his star? And, indeed, will any true sentiment of the future ever come to the man who has never had his resting place in a woman's heart.*

MAURICE MAETERLINCK.

## CHAPTER XVI

It will be an excellent thing for the descendants of the stiff-necked and repressed and unelastic old Puritans to mingle their blood with that of passionate and fiery and demonstrative Southern Europe. Out of such unions will come natural and normal human beings.

ELLA WHEELER WILCOX.

**A**S a result of the conversation and Bible reading on the part of the old Puritanical farmer and his wife, Ivo and Harriet received the warmest of welcomes when they showed up the next day. Indeed Joshua and Martha had shaken each warmly by the hand, while Harriet got a motherly kiss in addition before she could say to the couple:

“I am so glad you have guessed, without my having to tell you, that this handsome young gentleman can be none other than my better half, Captain Bruno. Ivo, shake hands again with the best and most devoted couple I know—Uncle Joshua and Aunt Martha Edwards.”

Ivo did as he was bidden with gratifying promptness and courtly grace. And, as he did so, the old farmer looked him through and through and up and down, remarking finally:

“Gosh! he’s a well set up chap, kind o’ like a stun Greek god I seed once.”

“You always did have discernment, Uncle Joshua, always hit the nail plump on the head. But in addition to being set up well, so that he is a joy to the eye, my Ivo is a descendant of the great Renaissance breed of artists, and proves it by his work. You must bring Aunt Martha to New York very soon, and make us a good visit. I will then show you what he can do, when he tries, in the art line.”

“And I tried mighty hard, you may be sure, because I feared that if I did not do something worth while, I would never win my American madonna.”

All laughed heartily at Ivo’s speech and his dramatic way of making it. Then Martha sighed and said, “Ah, me! I know precious little about any art, except the butter-making art.” Harriet was quick to comfort the down-



cast woman by saying, as she caught up one of her stiff, knotty, toil-worn hands and pressed a soft kiss upon it:

“Dearest Aunt, you are a finished artist in respect to that art, which is high above all other arts: The Art of Home-making.”

“Thank you, my dear, you’ve allers had such a nice way with you. And now lay aside your things. Supper is ready.”

The hungry young couple lost no time in complying with their hostess’s request, and soon were seated at a table loaded down with good, old-fashioned edibles.

“Have you come direct from New York?” asked the farmer as he passed them some home-made bread. Joshua’s eyesight was poor, otherwise he would not have asked the above question to a couple who looked decidedly seedy, already, from the fact that they had been tramping all day over a very picturesque but wild bit of country. Up hill and down hill they had marched—~~on~~ run, for a change—pushing their way through heavy underbrush and briars and brambles; wooed, occasionally

by a pebbly brook—glinting and gurgling and singing as it wound its way along through wood and vale—into loitering and tossing stones. Or, anon, they climbed some great height where with arms about each other they lost themselves in dreamy meditation as they looked upon the enchanting Hudson and in the hazy distance noted the great ocean. Harriet had managed to keep up with her military hero, whose legs had been well trained for some years; but having done so, she was desperately tired, while Ivo looked fresher than when they began their search for a suburban home-site, early in the day.

“Do we look as if we had come direct from the metropolis?” asked Harriet, with a decidedly fatigued though smiling expression on her face.

While this Puritan farmer was scrutinizing the two young people conscientiously, so as to give a truthful reply, his wife blurted out frankly:

“I must say, Harriet, I never saw you so mussed-up-like as I see you to-night. Why,

your dress is actually torn in one or two places, your hands are scratched, your shoes all but ruined. But mussed-up clothes are of small importance. You, yourself, are, as usual, the picture of health. How is it that you always keep so well and strong? Now, there's our Jennie, a trained nurse, supposed to have learned the latest and best ways to get people well, always coming home to be nursed herself, ain't she, father?"

The farmer looked sad as he replied to his wife's query:

"Jennie never was very strong, and that's a trying business she's larned. I wish she'd give it up and stay at home. What ails the girls and women nowadays that we can't keep 'em at home any more, Harriet? Not even when we buy 'em a piano!"

"I don't know—unless it is because America has made her Tree of Knowledge of good and evil so easy of access that they have lost their heads trying to secure as much fruit as possible in the shortest time."

"And while the American women are cram-

ming their heads with ill-digested knowledge at the expense of their bodies and babies, their men of finance are frenziedly filling their pockets with ill-got gold," added Ivo with disgust.

"You are right, young man! You are right! Father and I have brought into the world four children, every one of whom flew away as soon as he or she could get away. Why? Oh, country life and home life was too slow for them. My three boys are now on the Pacific Coast making money hand over fist, and so absorbed in business that we scarce ever hear from 'em. And if one of 'em, once in an age, does send me a letter, I weep with joy when I get it, and again with sorrow when I see how short it is. Then when I answer, father says, 'Cut it short,' lest a long letter weary them. My God! it is a harrowing thing to be the parents of up-to-date American children—ain't it, father?"

Tears, in great, big drops, were falling swiftly over Mrs. Edwards's thin, wrinkled cheeks as she finished speaking, while the fast-



dimming eyes of the old farmer became blurred with moisture. But he was a plucky old fellow. He would not let on—what was quite true—that his old heart felt their children's neglect deeper yet than the more easily moved one of his wife. Ignoring his wife's question, he exclaimed cheerily:

“Mother, where's your eyes? Can't you see that the young folks have had their fill of your good cooking? Lead the way to our best room! I know that Harriet is dyin' to talk to me about this 'ere suburban home she's been tryin' to get her father to build nigh ten years. I hope, young chap, you'll let Harriet have her way sometimes—'cause everybody knows she's got a wise head on her young shoulders.”

“That proves it has been good for you *not* to have your own way,” said Ivo, *sotto voce*, as he placed a chair for Harriet close beside his own in the farmer's best room.

The conversation that took place during the two hours that followed, wonderfully cheered the sad hearts of Joshua and Martha Edwards; since, by this time, the young couple,—making

such a handsome picture together, and such an animated one, so full of the joy of life,—had thoroughly convinced the old couple that they, too, were on the threshold of a new and more varied existence than had hitherto been their lot. It seemed that Ivo and Harriet actually needed them to help carry out their plans for the making of a new Home-Paradise to be all fitted up with the best, up-to-date American improvements. The land, it appeared, was to be cultivated in a truly scientific, Burbank way, the stock to be of the finest, most approved breeds. Better yet! Harriet felt sure that Ivo and herself could offer such inducements to the sons of the old couple, that one or more might be induced to return and lend a hand to the new enterprise connected with their birthplace. Perhaps, likewise, the daughter would cheerfully accede to their united desire that she become a member of their Family of Friends, when she understood how charming and romantic a Home can be made — without servants!

Accordingly, when the time came for the

young couple to be escorted to the suite of rooms prepared for them, by the old couple, it was noticeable that the faces of Joshua and Martha shone once more with joy and hope.

As for the temporary bridal suite, each room contained a well-made bed that looked very comfortable and very enticing. Uncle Joshua explained to Harriet why they had set up a bed in the front sitting-room.

"I told Martha," he said, "that married people nowadays are not taught to sleep in one bed, like we were; that, nowadays, they slept in different beds and often in different rooms."

"You are a very thoughtful man, Uncle Joshua, and after such a tramp as Ivo and I have had to-day, we surely need a bed apiece to repose in."

As Ivo had been escorting Mrs. Edwards up the stairs, he did not hear this ominous conversation.

"Well, good-night to you both!" said the happy farmer.

"And happy dreams, if ye dream at all!" added his wife, after kissing Harriet good-

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night. Then she followed her husband downstairs. From thence they proceeded to their own bedroom, located in a one-story ell. The most attractive feature of this room was an old-fashioned fireplace, which always looked picturesque, while, during the cold, dark winter days it was a source of cheer and satisfaction to the old couple.

Harriet and Ivo found nothing specially attractive by way of adornment in either room, with the exception of a fine large engraving of Abraham Lincoln, hung in a prominent place in the front room.

"What a striking painting I could have made of that man with his strong, bony, melancholy face and long, thin, gaunt form—if I could only have had the opportunity!" remarked Ivo as he gave close attention to this engraving.

"Ah, yes, indeed! with your genius for making the inner man come forth at your call—and at his best, most characteristic moment! Truly, America has been blest with some very great men, so great that her people do not yet



comprehend how great. There is Thomas Paine, now. Few understand what comprehensive, God-like common-sense that man was endowed with, and what a miracle it worked in behalf of America and Liberty at the right psychological time. Speaking of common sense reminds me that I am ready to drop from fatigue, and must seek rest. So are you, Ivo, mio, though I must admit that your limbs have been better trained than mine."

Thus speaking Harriet gently loosened her palm from Ivo's hand, then pressed a kiss upon it, when she left him and glided quickly into the adjoining room, closing the door after her.

"What a very modest young woman my American Madonna is," observed Ivo to himself. "Heaven only knows when I shall be able to obtain a good view of that exquisite bust of hers, and of her finely molded arms. I mean to put both into durable sculpture—when we become sufficiently well acquainted."

Ivo waited patiently enough for what seemed to him an age. However, he reached

a point when he could stand his present isolation no longer, so he approached the closed door and timidly knocked. There was no response from within. He knocked again a little louder. Still, no response. By this time he was in a fever of impatience. He, therefore, softly tried to open the door. It yielded a little, but open it would not. He began to scrutinize it carefully. "Chielo! it is actually bolted inside!" was his ominously muttered comment. "What to do next?" he asked himself, as he turned away in a furious mood. When he had become a little more calm, he returned, and kneeling down, he put his lips close to the crack where the door lacked a trifle of meeting the door post. Using his most pleading, pathetic accents, he said, "Harriet, carissima, I can't sleep without my good-night kiss."

There was a pause during which Ivo's heart thumped so loud that he was afraid he would not be able to hear what his American Madonna said, even if she was still awake and responded. His fear proved groundless, be-

cause the moment Ivo's ear caught the sound of her sweet, musical voice, his very heart stood still. This is what the poor, locked-out lover heard:

"Ivo, mio, go to bed and rest well. We are both dead tired. Besides, I must attend to some very important business to-morrow which requires a clear head and a well-rested body. Go to bed, sweetheart."

"Go to the devil, why don't you say?" exclaimed Ivo to himself as he got up off his knees and began stamping about the room, giving certain pieces of furniture a gratuitous kick when they pulled him up for recklessly approaching too close to them. His excited mind gave vent to furious comments on Americans:

"Gran' Dio! Up-to-date Americans are the devil! They care for nothing but business, which means corraling the Almighty Dollar! They can't take time to expand their minds with art, science, music or literature—nor stop to render thanks to their Maker who has made them heir of a glorious New World. The

sweetness and holiness of domestic life are not for them, because of business! business! business! . . . One year of business—of money-making, *à la American*, is enough for me. It is hell! where your associates are liars, rascals, thieves, whose one aim is to do you up. Even your friends prove false and treacherous in a money-making deal. Thank heaven, I have retired. No more money-making for me. I loathe, abhor, *detest* the game and the crowd. To what end this demoralizing, devitalizing, enslaving worship of the new god these Americans have set up—which they call Business, and for which they prostitute life, love and liberty? Race suicide of *bona fide* Americans? Looks like it! Ah, but it is a pity to see sweet women and even children infected with this lust for business and money, and thousands of homes broken up in consequence! Now there's my American Madonna, dowered with a wealth of womanhood, temptingly enshrined in a beautiful body, with the sweetest lips ever made by the good God—meant to be sipped much and often! Alas, all this quintessence of joy



is fast locked in that room on the other side of that mean door 'in order that business shall be properly attended to on the morrow'!"

Ivo paused in the midst of his furious stampede about his room, to scowl at the offending door. Then he resumed his bitter monologue, Italian fashion:

"Of course Harriet's clever enough to know that I would not be satisfied with one kiss—or two! America *does* breed clever women, and cleverness among women is catching. Men—religion—law—*something*, ought to get busy and pull them up again. Chielo! I wish I could pull one woman up—or out of her bed and thrash her!"

When Ivo came to reflect that he might not get his coveted kiss under such circumstances, his mood softened. He approached "that mean door," and kneeling down again applied his mouth anew to the crack. To himself he said, "I simply can't go to sleep so near and yet so far from my beautiful Madonna." Out loud he pathetically entreated, in low, but distinct tones:

"Carissima! have pity! I shall go mad if I don't get my good-night kiss. *Intendete?*"

Harriet gave a long, deep-drawn sigh. She was, as she had admitted, "dead tired." To march bravely, hour after hour, with a thoroughly trained military man had left her decidedly the worse for wear. Nevertheless she replied in her sweet, even tones:

"Angelo mio, rest well to-night. I will give you a double portion of kisses to-morrow morning. *Dorma bene*, sweetheart."

To hear again the voice he loved and which seemed to go direct to the center of his being and to set it vibrating in an exquisite manner, was a sort of comfort to the poor, locked-out lover. And to know that his Harriet was not too far gone into dreamland to hear his voice and perhaps be influenced by it, was another bit of satisfaction. However, he meant to have his good-night kisses—if he had to work all night for them! Again—with his mouth close to the little opening between door and door-post—he began, in a voice full of tears, to plead anew.

“Carissima—sweetest ever! I pray you have mercy on one who adores you—who cannot sleep a wink without a good-night kiss—from lips made to be kissed tenderly and often by the Divine Lover himself!”

A long pause followed this plea—so long that Ivo was in a fright lest Harriet was in a sound sleep. Just as he was cudgeling his brains what to do next, he heard her say in her most thoughtful way:

“Caro, let us give our lips a little vacation to-night. I am sending you a soul kiss for a change.”

The idea of his Harriet substituting a soul kiss for the “real thing” on the second night of their honeymoon, so enraged Ivo that he ~~in~~ ~~turn~~ must have made the air about him black and blue, filling it as he proceeded to do with all the swear words he could lay his tongue to in languages both dead and living. This word-storm producing no apparent effect, he pulled off a shoe and threw it slam-bang against “that mean door”—a rather rickety door which Captain Bruno was sorely tempted to break

down. Alas, only silence was his reward for his energetic protest against receiving a soul kiss in lieu of one warm with human vitality. Removing the other shoe, he threw that one with such force that the sole unbroken panel cracked with a loud noise, while the door itself shook as if an earthquake was in progress.

Harriet was now sufficiently alarmed to repeat in her most caressing, madonna-like tones:

“Angelo mio, be good and go to sleep. Why, if you continue to carry on as you are doing now, that good, pious couple downstairs will think I have got a madman up here, and rush up to protect me.”

The very idea of anybody's coming upstairs to interfere between him and his American Madonna frightened Ivo to such an extent that a dead silence followed Harriet's ominous words. At length, however, it was broken by Ivo—with mouth close to the crack—saying in a low, distinct, hissing manner:

“Imbecchile! To-morrow will be pay-day for you, all right!”



“Why, what will you do to me, Angelo mio?” came sleepily to Ivo’s intent ears.

“Do!” thundered the distracted lover, quite forgetting the pious couple below, “why the instant I catch sight of you I shall fling you across my knee and use my slipper—like this!”

To illustrate how he meant to chastise her in the morning, he began to beat the door in a manner quite suggestive of a tattoo, giving notice to soldiers to retreat, or to repair to their quarters in garrison, or to their tents in camp. This midnight exercise he perseveringly kept up until Harriet, really alarmed, said very seriously:

“Ivo, you *must* behave. Those good people know nothing of the artist temperament. Should they hear you carrying on in this way in the dead of night, they will be sure that you are an escaped lunatic. Heaven only knows what they will do then—perhaps raise the neighbors and the dogs!”

Perfect silence greeted this speech. Nothing apparently was doing; and Harriet had just breathed a sigh of intermingled relief and

fatigue, and was congratulating herself that at last Ivo was asleep, when the sound of a piano greeted her ears. "How lovely!" she exclaimed to herself, for it was being played in so careless, yet graceful and poetic a manner that she found herself listening, spell-bound, with delight. She rose at once and drew on a morning robe, intending to go immediately into the other room from whence proceeded such deliciously solemn, romantic music. Before she had reached the door, however, she stood still, transfixed by the sound of a lyric tenor voice, singing—ah, so beautifully! Harriet felt herself instantly transported on the vibrations of the lovely voice and exquisite music, to some abode whose name could be none other than Perfect Bliss. There she stood, looking like an adoring celestial visitant—scarcely breathing, her whole being thrilled, until the last sweetly solemn note died away.

What was the aria Ivo sang in a manner to remind one of Bonci, the most perfect artist of the last decade of the nineteenth century? Ah, it was that magnificent one—perhaps the very

finest, *divinest* of all tenor solos, the closing one in "The Elixir of Love."

Harriet drew back the bolt and swiftly opened the door, interposing between a being who, for the time, seemed divine and therefore to be adored; that is, in this case, to be heartily, enthusiastically kissed. *herself*

So athrill was Ivo's American Madonna with blissful emotion that she gave, without stint—what he liked best—kisses! She began with his abundant, shiny, bronze-gold hair. Having done that wonderful hirsute adornment ample justice, his lovely Raphael brow came in for attention. Next each eyelid, as well as each delicately tinted cheek, got its share. Neither was the top of Ivo's aristocratic nose or his firm chin overlooked. And last she placed her lips squarely on his, giving him the "real thing." Afterwards as Ivo rose and took possession of her two hands,—to make sure she should not vanish again to secure rest in order that she might the better devote her energies to that horrid vampire, Business,—she said a little reproachfully:

“Caro, why have you never told me that you could sing like an angel?”

Ivo, though awfully well pleased that he had found an easy way to manage his American Madonna, yet, nevertheless, veiled his joy, and replied a little contemptuously:

“Poof! Have you not found out yet that all Italians are natural-born musicians, all familiar with such grand operas as are worthy the name, from childhood up?”

“Ah, but you can count on the fingers of one hand—and then find you have too many—those who can sing in so finished a manner as you have just done, and who have voices of such lovely tenor quality. Come, own up! Tell me what must be true, viz., that you have been taking a lot of lessons since I saw you last, and thrown heart and soul into the making of what you are now—an artist in music, as well as in art itself.”

“Gran Dio! you don’t suppose I would leave a stone unturned to win my American Madonna, do you? When I was not cudgeling my brains trying to make money like an



American, I was painting, or, if not busy so, I was singing. Ask the best maestro in Rome whether I took any vocal lessons or not! Chielo! I never looked at a woman the whole of the past year, my whole mind and soul being concentrated on doing the things that would win you, *ingrate.*”

As Ivo said “ingrate,” he raised one of the hands he held and bit it, but not badly, being too happy.

“How did you know that I was passionately fond of music?” queried Harriet wonderingly.

“Have you forgotten how you once confided to me your girlish aspiration to be a great singer, like Malibran — having her kind of voice — and how your father stopped your music lessons as soon as he saw that music was becoming a passion with you? and at the same time nipped, too, your budding love for your Italian maestro? Dio mio! how thankful I am that your father nipped wisely in at least two instances!”

Harriet replied with enthusiasm:

“My father was a very wise and a very good

man. How thankful I am that he let me take vocal lessons as long as he did. Ah, me! how beautifully we shall sing together one of these days for our dear children!" Harriet's eyes shone with joy, for the mother-light was in them.

Ivo could not reply, his heart being too full of speechless, sacred emotion. Indeed, something inexpressibly divine had taken possession of his whole being. Mutely he bowed his head on the shoulder of his American Madonna, and as it rested there she felt warm tears trickle down—down—into her bosom.

Inevitably there followed Love's holy, creative kiss.

A sequel to "An American Madonna" is in course of preparation.—M. I. T.









